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THE BURMAN

HIS LIFE AND NOTIONS

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BY

SHWAY YOE

SUBJECT OF THE GREAT QUEEN

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THE BURMAN

HIS LIFE AND NOTIONS

EMENDATIONS.

For "Oungbwè," p. 64, l. 14, and p. 66, l. 14, *read* "Oungthwè."
,, "thohn-ya" and "a-thohn-ya," p. 109, l. 3, *read* "thohn-nya" and "a-thohn-nya."
,, "woolla," p. 137, l. 7, *read* "woo'lè."
,, "Nana Geeree," p. 160, l. 20, ,, "Nahla Geeree."
,, "Athetmana," p. 164, l. 31, ,, "Ah-tappana."
,, "Sandinah," p. 168, l. 24, ,, "Sandimah."
,, "Taposa," p. 216, l. 9, ,, "Tapoht-tha."
,, "Dansagoo," p. 230, l. 22, ,, "Dantagoo."
,, "Lawbah," p. 248, l. 2, ,, "Lawhah."
,, "Eugenie," p. 281, l. 18, ,, "Eugenia."

THE BURMAN;

HIS LIFE AND NOTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

FIRST YEARS.

It is fortunate for the young Burman that on his first appearance in the world all attention is directed to the mother, and the "little stranger" is left very much to himself till he has attained a stronger vitality. Were it not so, the rival parties of the Dietists and Druggists might quarrel over the relative quantities of the four elements, fire, air, earth, and water, composing the new arrival, and diet and dose him out of existence immediately, in a heroic attempt to attain an equilibrium of forces. The mother indeed is the major point of interest in all countries, but childbirth nowhere entails such penalties as in Burma. Directly the child is born, the mother is rubbed all over with na-nwin (turmeric), and a big fire is lighted as near as the construction of the wooden or bamboo house permits, while rugs and blankets are heaped over her to the extent of the possessions of the family. As speedily as possible the midwife prepares a draught called say sehn (green medicine), the composition of which

is a tradition with the Woon Swès, and is kept a secret from inquisitive males. This the victim in bed has to drink perpetually during seven days, and for the same period, irrespective of the blankets and the time of year, is heated up with oht poo. These are big circular or lozenge-shaped bricks. They are heated blazing hot in the wood fire, dropped for a few seconds into a pot full of water, and then wrapped up in cloths and applied to the body of the mother. In addition to this doses of turmeric are regularly administered, and every now and then she is made to smell sah-mohn-net, a plant (the *Nigella sativa*), which is put in an earthen pot, strongly heated, and then triturated into the shape of a ball. The odour is not exactly such as one would recognise as calculated to exhilarate any one, but probably after the hot bricks and the say sehn everything else comes as a matter of detail. All this is done to drive out the noxious humours which are supposed to be generated by the birth of a child. On the seventh day the woman takes an elementary kind of Turkish bath. She sits over a large jar of boiling water, medicated with tamarind twigs and a few other kinds of leaves and grasses, with a blanket over her. After about an hour of this she has a cold bath, and is then free to do as she pleases. She usually goes to bed.

It might be supposed that under this treatment death in child-bearing would be very frequent, but as far as imperfect statistics can show the percentage is not much higher than in other countries. The result, however, appears in another way. A woman ages up ten or fifteen years for every child she has. It is satisfactory to notice that in all the larger towns in Lower Burma the more unpleasant features are fading away before the example and influence of women of other nationalities. In the

jungle and in Upper Burma, however, ancient use and wont still prevail, and the young mother of fourteen or fifteen is shrivelled into thirty with her first baby.

If a woman gives birth to a still-born child, a piece of iron is placed in the cloth in which the body is wrapped, or in the coffin if there is one, and at the burial some member of the family says some such formula as "Never more return into thy mother's womb till this metal becomes soft as down."

If a married woman dies before bearing a child (a-lohn hnin thay thee), a Cæsarean operation is performed, and the a-lohn is buried in some secret place. The reason alleged for this is, that were it not done, the husband in future existences would marry this woman again, and she would die in the same way. Were the embryo not secretly buried it would be disinterred by hmaw-sayahs, necromancers, and wizards, who would make evil uses of it. Children's cauls are as highly thought of by Burmans as they are by English sailors; only where the tar thinks he will be saved from drowning, the Turanian expects to gain the patronage of any great person he may address.

The infant having survived and the mother recovered from her roasting, the next thing to be done is to name the child. This usually happens about a fortnight after the birth. A fortunate day and hour is sought out by some Brahmin astrologer, or a sayah of lesser note, if there is no such dignitary in the neighbourhood. A great feast, as elaborate as the wealth or the ambition and borrowing capacities of the parents admit, is prepared, and all the friends of the family and the neighbours are invited to come. The child's head is usually washed for the first time on this day. The ceremony is therefore called kin-bohn tat thee. A decoction of the pods and bark of the soap acacia (*Acacia rugata*) or kin-bohn is prepared, and

with this the midwife washes the infant's head and the guests wash their hands. Most of them bring friendly contributions towards the feast, or perhaps a little money. The mother sits down in the centre of the circle with the infant in her arms, and near her is the father. The company sit gravely smoking and chewing betel for a time, and then some elder, or a near relation of the parents, seems struck with a name, and suggests it aloud. Everybody accepts it on the spot, and falls to discussing the aptness of the name and the accomplishments and virtues of people they have known with that appellation. This is, however, all a pre-arranged thing. The father and mother have settled beforehand what the child is to be called, and have apprised the loo gyee selected what is to be the result of his cogitations. The midwife then gets a present according to the means of the family, having previously, after the seven days' roasting, received the regulation fee of one pyee, the sixteenth of a basket of husked rice, and one mat, a four anna bit. Then everybody adjourns to the feast, which, with the dessert of le'-pet, salted ginger cut into small strips, ground nuts, fried garlic, the invariable betel apparatus, cheroots, and what not, pass the time till nightfall, when, except in the case of poor people, there is always a pwè which carries on proceedings till the next morning.

The name given thus appears to be entirely a matter of choice; but this is not so. The consonants of the language are divided into groups which are assigned to the days of the week, Sunday having all the vowels to itself. With all respectable families it is an invariable rule that the child's name must begin with one of the letters belonging to the day on which it was born, but within these limits any name may be chosen. As an immediate consequence it follows that a Burman has a birthday every week, a

frequency of recurrence which renders the event monotonous, and precludes the friendly amenities of western nations on the occasion of natal days.

The letters of the alphabet are apportioned to the days of the week in the following rough rhyme which every Burman child can repeat with as much certainty as the English one will display in the recitation of Little Jack Horner:—

Ka, kha, ga, gha, nga, Taninla.
Sa, hsa, za, zha, nya, Ainga.
Ta, hta, da, dha, na, Sanay.
Pa, hpa, ba, bha, ma, Kya-thabaday.
La, wa,, Bohddhahu.
Ya, ya (the Pali and Arakanese ra), Yahu.
Tha, ha, Thouk-kya.
A, Taninganoay.

That is to say children born on Monday have for the inital letter of their names, K, Kh, G, Gh, or Ng; for example—Moung Ngway Khine, Mr. Silver Sprig; Moung Gouk, Mr. Crooked; Mah Kway Yoh, Miss or Mrs. Dog's Bone; Mah Khin, Miss or Mrs. Lovable. It will be noticed that in Miss Dog's Bone's names the initial letters of the two words do not agree as to the day. This often occurs, and the first name (Moung and Mah being merely honorary additions), always denotes the birthday. The better class families avoid such a mixing, however, as far as possible.

Tuesday's children have the choice of S or S aspirated (practically the same), Z, Zh, and Ny. For example:—Moung San Nyohn, Mr. Beyond Comparison; Moung Poh Sin, Mr. Grandfather Elephant; Mah Soh, Miss or Mrs. Naughty.

Those born on Saturday have T, Ht, D, Dh, and N. The aspirated and unaspirated letters have to most Englishmen precisely the same sound, though a practised ear

detects the difference immediately. Examples are:—Moung Bah Too, Mr. Like His Father; Mah Nay Htohn, Miss or Mrs. Sunshine; Moung Doo Woon, Mr. Pole Star; Mee Noo, Miss Tender.

Those born on Thursday select from P, Hp, B, Hb, and M. For example:—Oo Poh Myah, Old Grandfather Emerald; Moung Boh Galay, Mr. Little Officer; Mah Hmoay, Miss or Mrs. Fragrant; Mee Meht, Miss Affection.

Wednesday has L and W. Examples:—Moung Hoh, Mr. Yonder; Mah Weing Hla, Miss or Mrs. All-Round Pretty; Mah Hehn, Miss or Mrs. Growler.

From noon till midnight on Wednesday is represented as a special day, or, at any rate, under a special constellation called Yahu, and those born between those hours have the alternative of the two Y's, one of which is sounded R in Pali and by the Arakanese. Examples are:—Moung Yoh, Mr. Honesty; Mah Yohn, Miss or Mrs. Rabbit, Oo Youk, Old Individual.

Friday has Th and H. Examples:—Moung Than, Mr. Million; Moung Thet Shay, Mr. Long Life; Mah Thin, Miss or Mrs. Learned; Mè Thaw (old) Mrs. Noisy.

A is the only letter assigned to Sunday, but the combination with it of the symbol of any other vowel changes it to the sound of that vowel. For example:—Moung Ohn, Mr. Cocoanut; Moung Utt Nee, Mr. Red Needle; Mah Eh, Miss Cold; Mah Ehng Soung, Mrs. Housekeeper; Oo Oh, Old Pot.

A common popular belief is, that, according to the day of the week (or rather the constellation representing that day) on which a man is born, so will his character be. Thus a man's name discloses his probable characteristics to the superstitious.

A man born on Monday will be jealous; on Tuesday,

honest; on Wednesday, short-tempered, but soon calm again, the characteristic being intensified under Yahu; on Thursday, mild; on Friday, talkative; on Saturday, hot-tempered and quarrelsome; on Sunday, parsimonious.

Not only has every day its special character and its fixed letters, but there is also a particular animal assigned to symbolise it, and red or yellow wax candles are made in the forms of these animals to be offered at the Pagoda by the pious. Each worshipper offers the creature-candle representing his birthday, or that of any particular friend or relation whom he wishes well. In this way Monday is represented by a tiger; Tuesday, by a lion; Wednesday, by an elephant with tusks; Yahu, by an elephant without tusks; Thursday, by a rat; Friday, by a guinea pig; Saturday, by a nagah or dragon; Sunday, by a kalohn, the fabulous half-beast, half-bird, which guards one of the terraces of Mount Myemmoh (Meru), the centre of the universe.

Little candles of this kind are to be had at any of the stalls which cluster about the steps and the foot of every pagoda in the country, and they are as freely offered as flowers, and fruits, and gold leaf.

It will be seen that there is no such thing as a surname among the Burmese. A man may have a dozen sons not one of whom has the same name as his father. Moung, literally "brother," has come to stand practically for "Mister." Poh and Shway and Bah may be applied to any one without regard to his birthday, Shway implying usually politeness or affection. Nga, used in the English law courts and by pompous native officials generally, implies superiority claimed by the speaker or writer. Koh denotes friendship, or superior age and dignity in the person addressed. Moung Shway Than might call himself indifferently—Moung Than, Poh Than, Bah

Than, Koh Than, Nga Than, or Shway Than, and might add Moung to any one of these. As a matter of fact most Burmans chop about their name a good deal during their lives. He may begin by being called Loogalay Gnè, "Little Wee Man." When he grows up a little the family probably get to call him Loogalay Gyee, "Big Little Man." Later, when he begins to think of his appearance and look after the girls—and they begin that sort of thing very early in Burma—he probably calls himself Moung Loogalay or Shway Loogalay, "Mr. Little-man," or "Mr. Boy," or "Golden Boy." There are a variety of other changes possible and likely. Finally when he reaches the age of thirty-five or forty he either readopts the original Gnè and calls himself Oo Gnè, "Old Small" or "Old Wee"; or takes Oo Loogalay instead, "Old Boy." To this additions may be made according to fancy. Indeed the possible forms of any given Burmese name would supply a very fair sum in permutations and combinations.

There is a similar freedom with the women's names. Every woman married or unmarried may be called Mah. When she becomes elderly Mè is very often used. Mee implies youth in the person addressed, or affection on the part of the speaker. A young husband or lover usually calls his lady love Mee Mee. She addresses him as Moung, "brother," or familiarly as Taw, or Shin. Bah in Lower Burma is a polite form. In Upper Burma, especially in the Palace, Moung Moung, or Tin Tin, or Teht Tin (thinking on the forehead) are used in a courteous way. It is considered hardly civil in any case to use the bare name; the office held, or some particular alms given by the person addressed supplies the easiest equivalent; otherwise some friendly form is employed in speaking. Kin-lay is used similarly in familiar fashion or in a friendly

way to those of lesser rank. Thus a prince would use it in addressing an A-pyo-daw, a maid of honour.

Sometimes when a boy grows up he does not like the name his parents gave him. He can then change it by a very simple process. He makes up a number of packets of le'-pet and sends round a friend to deliver them to all his acquaintances and relations. The messenger goes to the head of the house and says: "I have come from Moung Shway Pyin (Mr. Golden Stupid). He is not to be called by that name any more. When you invite him call him Moung Hkyaw Hpay (Mr. Celebrated Father). Be good enough to eat this pickled tea," and then he goes on to the next house. It is not imperative that the letters of the birthday should be adhered to, but it is usually done. Women very seldom change names. It looks too much like a broad hint that they are growing up and have some notion of themselves, or that they have a mind of their own, which might prove irksome to possible husbands.

A careful note is made of the exact hour of birth with the object of drawing up the za-dah or certificate of birth which every Burman has, and carefully consults, with the help of an astrologer, for the fixing of fortunate days and hours thoughout his life. Sometimes the za-dah is drawn up very shortly after birth, but ordinarily not till the child is five or six years old. Then an old Pohn-na, a Brahmin, or any ordinary astrologer is called in. He records on a doubled up strip of palm leaf the year, the month, the day and hour at which the child was born; the name given to it; the planet in the ascendant at the moment of birth and the house in which it was at the time. This is scratched neatly on the palm leaf in the usual way with a metal style. On the other side are a number of cabalistic squares and numbers from which the future calculations may be made. There are said to be eight gyoh, or

planets, and from these the days of the week are named, Wednesday having a second, Yahu, which rules from midday to midnight. Each of the planets has its own point of the compass as follows:—

N.

Yahu. 12 Symbol—Tuskless Elephant. Wednesday, 12 P.M. to 12 A.M. Unnamed.	Thouk-kya. 21 Symbol—Guinea Pig. Friday. Venus.	Taninganoay. 6 Symbol—Kalohn. Sunday. The Sun.
Kyathabaday. 19 Symbol—Rat. Thursday. Jupiter.		Taninla. 15 Symbol—Tiger. Monday. The Moon.
Sanay. 10 Symbol—Nagah. Saturday. Saturn.	Bohddahu. 17 Symbol—Tusked Elephant. Wednesday, 12 A.M. to 12 P.M. Mercury.	Ainga. 8 Symbol—Lion. Tuesday. Mars.

W. E.

S.

The stations, numbers, and symbols of the planets are recorded in a jingling rhyme, which is one of the first things boys learn in the monastic schools, *e.g.*—

"Taninla kyah
Ta-seh gna
Nay nya
Shay yat ga."

"Monday's number, I ween,
Is always fifteen;
The tiger's the beast,
And its place is the East."

There are various ways of calculating the horoscope, most of them not to be understanded of the people, but the most popular, because the preliminaries are evident to everybody, is from the numbers given above. A person born on Monday remains under the influence of the moon for fifteen years. Then he passes into the house of Mars and sojourns there for eight years. At the age of twenty-three, Mercury presides over him and continues to do so for the next seventeen years, and so on to the end which mounts up to 108 years. Should he outlive that he would begin the circle over again. Another way is to divide the inquirer's age by eight. If there is no remainder, the horoscope is made up from the gyoh under which he was born. If there is a remainder, the Baydin Sayah counts it out round the figure, in the direction of the hands of a watch, commencing with the birth planet. Thus a man born on Thursday, now twenty-nine years of age, would be under the influence of the moon. The gyoh at the four cardinal points, east, south, west, and north are happy in their influences, those on the diagonal rhumbs not so good. Yahu, and especially Saturday, have a particularly sinister influence. A man does most of the stupid and vicious things in his life while he is in Saturn's house. A young man born on Wednesday will need a lot of ballast to tide him though the ten years of Saturn, seeing that he enters on the danger at the age of seventeen.

Little gilded and red painted signboards are put up at all the pagodas, displaying the nan, the symbol, and the relative position of all the planets. Sometimes people worshipping at the pagoda go to the point of the gyoh, in whose house they were born, and offer up their lauds and candles there. But this is a mere matter of individual fancy, and is hardly open to those born in the diagonally

situated houses, for the niche shrines, if there are more than one at the pagoda, are always at the four cardinal points, and if there is only one, as is usual at small pagodas, it is to the East.

The za-dah is carefully kept by the parents until the child is old enough to take care of it himself, and thenceforward it is guarded as the most valuable possession the person has. No matter how often the name is changed the new one is never put in the za-dah, so that this certificate cannot be trusted to implicitly for a man's name. Some of them are very beautifully engraved and ornamented, but they are naturally not often to be seen. I only know of two in England at the present time (1881) one of which is my own and the other belonging to a travelling Burman. When a man dies, the za-dah is either destroyed or preserved as a memento by the family.

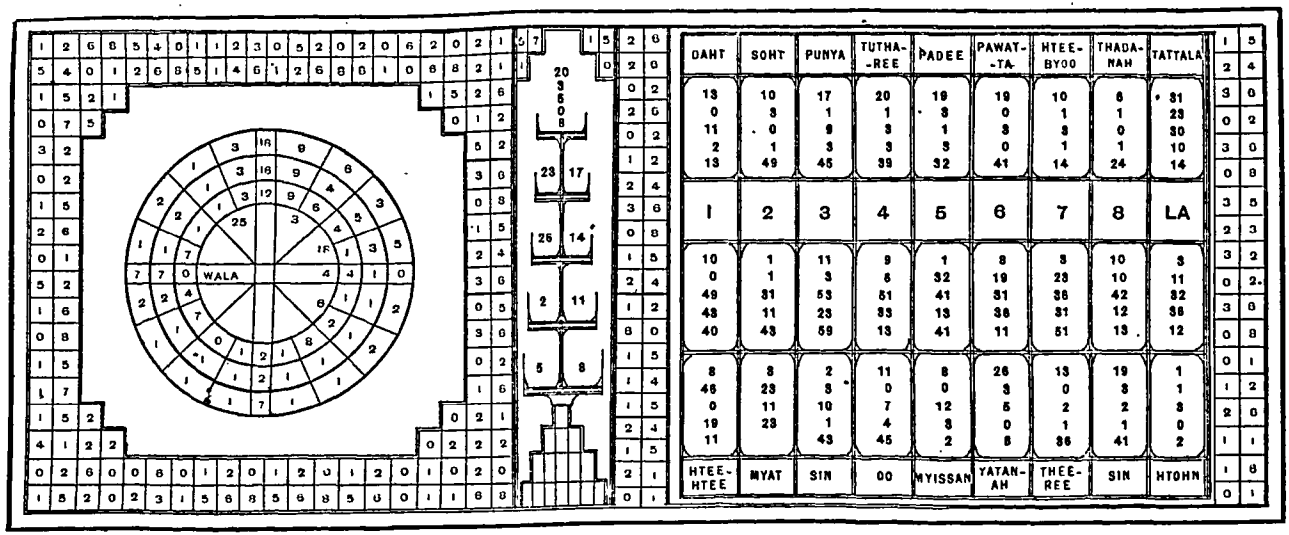
A curious instance of the firm belief of the nation in the reasonableness of the conviction that the planet under which one is born influences the fates and actions of one's life, is the fact that royalty ordains that the coins and measures used by traders shall bear the emblem of the monarch's birthday. Thus for example all the gold coins used in Upper Burma bazaars during the last reign had the figure of a lion on them, Mindohn Min having been born on a Tuesday. The few remaining from previous reigns bearing other symbols were rigidly kept out of the sight of Government officials. The Governor of the Fifth Great Synod, though probably the mildest and best sovereign Burma ever had, would certainly have stood no trifling in matters of this kind, which if not amounting actually to a part of the religion, were at any rate very intimately connected with it. His son Theebaw Min, however, notoriously indifferent to religion, if a stronger word might not even be admissible, let the old weights

remain in use, and probably calls it the march of civilisation.

The naming and the construction of the za-dah being finished, the principal events in the youthful Burman's life are over, and the children run about in as happy a state of nudity as the respectability of the family permits; and boys and girls steal grandmamma's cheroot, and potter about making mud pies according to cosmopolitan infantile habit, and not seldom getting up decorous and serious representations of the choral dances and dramatic performances they have seen. The spectacle of a little girl vigorously puffing a big green cheroot while she moulds a heap of mud into shapely form is only a little more startling to the white-faced foreigner than the declamatory passion of a five-year-old princeling. So it goes on till the eighth year is reached; then it is time to go to the monastic school.

On the following page is a copy of the za-dah of Shin Thooza. The young lady, I regret to say, is dead. The publication of her horoscope cannot therefore enable malicious persons to work her any harm by means of spells. This is on the obverse. I have submitted the figures to two very distinguished wranglers, but they have been unable to detect any system in them.

On the reverse, surrounded by an ornamental border of numbers written in accordance with a rhyme, are recorded in mystic language the details. The young lady was born in the year 1220 B.E. (twenty-three years ago), in the astrological cycle 422, in the month of Ta-bohdwè, on the ninth of the waxing moon, and the seventh day (Friday) of the week, in the evening, at thohn chettee gyaw, a little past the third hour, or more exactly, three nayee, two pads, and ten beezana. Then the precise position of the constellation in the heavens is noted. It is thirteen bằwa



DAHT	SOHT	PUNYA	TUTHA--REE	PADEE	PAWAT--TA	HTEE-BYOO	THADA-NAH	TATTALA
13	10	17	20	19	19	10	6	31
0	3	1	1	3	0	1	1	23
11	0	9	3	1	3	3	0	30
2	1	3	3	3	0	1	1	10
13	49	45	39	32	41	14	24	14
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	LA
10	1	11	9	1	8	3	10	3
0	1	3	6	32	19	23	10	11
49	31	53	51	41	31	36	42	32
43	11	23	33	13	36	31	12	36
40	43	59	13	41	11	51	13	12
8	8	2	11	8	26	13	19	1
46	23	8	0	0	3	0	3	1
0	11	10	7	12	5	2	2	3
19	23	1	4	3	0	1	1	0
11		43	45	2	8	36	41	2
HTEE-HTEE	MYAT	SIN	OO	MYISSAN	YATAN-AH	THEE-REE	SIN	HTOHN

(feet), five finger breadths, three mayaw (grains' length), one sessamum seed (nan), and eight hairs' breadths from the planet. Then it winds up to the effect that this is the horoscope of the maiden, whom, that she may be known by a pleasant name, her parents have called Shin Thooza. "May she live to be a hundred and twenty!" Alas! she did not.

At either side of these details are two identical magic squares, formed in accordance with the well-known Hindoo Law. Over one is written "The Buddha;" over the other "The Law;" beneath the former "Rangoon," and the latter "650." The two palm-leaves are tightly sewn together, and the writing and figures, done with a metal style on the dry leaf, are very neatly executed.

2	9	4
7	5	3
6	1	8

The general construction of all za-dahs is the same, but there are very considerable divergences in the number of figures. In another—I do not say whose it is—there are two circles only in the left portion, and only eight divisions in the right half, while several of the headings to the columns are different. The tee-padee-teing, the "highest post," between the two, also varies. I may mention that, beginning with the second stage on the left, descending and going up the other side, the numbers increase by three, 2, 5, 8, 11, &c. This is the case in all za-dahs, but they do not necessarily begin with the same number.

CHAPTER II.

SCHOOL DAYS.

I SUPPOSE Englishmen will never get rid of the notion that monastic schools must needs be dull and dismal, that hours of study only alternate with seasons of austerity and rough punishments. The uninhabited, almost deserted, appearance of the Burmese kyoung; its isolated position; the solemn, restful front which it always preserves, no matter how lightened up by profuse gilding and the carved magnificence of its panels and eaves' boards, or how embowered in rich and waving foliage; the austere aspect and slow-paced gait of the mendicants in their sad yellow robes—all these things inevitably encourage the foreigner in the belief that the monotony and the discipline must crush all life and light-heartedness out of the young scholars.

Nothing, however, can be farther from the actual fact. No Etonian, no old Rugbeian, can look back with greater delight on triumphs on the river or in the foot-ball field, than the grown-up Burman does on his early days at the Pohngyee Kyoung. There are no rough games to remember, it is true, no strivings of any kind with members of another institution. Those things do well enough for a cold-country people. The Burman's reminiscences are

of a quieter kind. There was the emulation with the chin lohn, the wicker foot-ball, to see who could keep it longest in the air by dexterous use of knee, foot, shoulder, thigh, and cheek. How it relieved the body and freshened the mind after hours of poring over little hand-blackboards, covered with cramped words and letters in the quiet rooms inside. Then there were the games at gohn nyin hto, an elementary combination of skittles and ninepins, played with the big flat seeds of a jungle creeper. Pleasant they were under the shade of the great mango and peepul trees and the lofty cocoanut and palmyra palms, and exciting were the games, so that the customary stillness of the place was rudely broken upon by disputing voices, till a monk would come out and bring all back to work again as a penance. Then during the work there was the fun of the writing hour, when everybody had to write out maxims and prayers on his little parabeik with a clumsy pointed steatite pencil. There were always some stiff-fingered big pupils who could not manage to write their copy neatly or correctly, and as punishment had to take the good writers on their backs and march ruefully up and down the long schoolroom during pleasure. Sometimes they were thrashed, but the other punishment was the more dreaded. Then there was the schoolmaster monk, who would tell fairy stories of the other three great islands which lie in the sea round about Myemmoh mountain; of the half-moon-faced western islanders, and the wondrous tree that bore everything eatable one could wish for and delivered it ready cooked; the joys of the six heavens of the Nats and the grisly horrors of Nga-yè, with its fearful ages of fantastic punishments. Every now and again travelling necromancers and Hmaw Sayahs would spend a night or two at the monastery, and in recompense for the little delicacies and odds and ends of food which

good-natured neophytes would get for them, used to tell stories of witchery and marvel. Sometimes there would be a Sah-haw Sayah, a kind of cyclic poet, who knew half the zahts in the language by heart, and would recite a little just for practice. Or a tattooing Sayah would come round and mark some particularly favoured youth with a quaint figure. Discussion as to its meaning and probable virtues would be carried on in the shadowy evenings for months afterwards. Varieties of this kind recur to the old Burman as he thinks of the schooldays long ago, and he sighs with as much conviction as any European that there are no days so happy as the schooldays.

English rule has disturbed old customs a good deal in Lower Burma, but even now we may say that as an invariable rule, when a boy has reached the age of eight or nine years he goes as a matter of course to the Pohngyee Kyoung. It is open to all alike—to the poor fisherman's son as well as to the scion of princely blood—for no one pays anything, and it is not carefully considered who it is that fills the monkish begging pots in the daily round. Thus every Buddhist boy in the country is taught to read and write, and in this respect at least there are but very few illiterate Burmans. This primary education must by no means be confounded with entry into the monastery as a Koyin-galay, or novice. Strictly speaking, this ceremony ought not to take place before the age of fifteen, and the earlier sojourn is only a preparation for it. The younger pupils may become boarders in the monastic building if they choose, but they do not assume the yellow robe, which marks them, for however short a time it may be worn, as members of the Assembly of the Perfect. They wear their ordinary clothes and retain their secular name.

As soon as the boy enters the monastery he is set down

in the big schoolroom beside all the other boys, and receives a roughly-made black wooden slate. On this are written a few of the letters, perhaps the whole of the alphabet. A little explanation starts him off, and for the next few days he is engaged in shouting out their sounds at the top of his voice. Nobody minds him, for all the other scholars are similarly engaged in hallooing, and the monks derive a sense of comfort and a virtuous consciousness of doing good from the noise. It is as soothing as the sound of his mill-wheels to the miller, or the roar of traffic to the cockney. If a boy stops shouting, it is a sign that he has stopped working—and if he is not meditating mischief, it is probable that he is about to go to sleep, and he is corrected accordingly. The method is an admirable one for keeping the boys occupied — much more so than civilised Western methods—though I fear a council of English head-masters would scout the idea. The casual foreign observer who goes about taking notes, like Grose or the "Rampant M.P.," passes the ecclesiastical school, and in amazement at the seeming uproar within, declares that monastery schools are hopelessly badly conducted, and without the semblance of discipline. As a matter of fact, the more noise there is going on, the more work there is being got through.

Doubtless it is a primitive method — doubtless there are thick-headed boys with tough lungs who shout out the kah gyee, kah gway (the A, B, C) with but the slightest portion of it remaining in their brains. There must be, because sometimes a boy takes a year to get through the alphabet,[1] the combination of vowel symbols, and the alterations of sound effected by the union of consonants, all of which are mere materials, and only a very small portion of the complicated system of the language. Never-

[1] Called the thin-bohn-gyee, the "great basket of learning."

theless everybody learns in the end, and then they are set to read in the same way, and gradually advance in the immemorial regulation subjects. The first books—all the books, in fact, put in the boys' hands—are religious. They learn the five universal commandments, the five subsidiary rules, the Pali formulæ to be employed at the pagoda—pattering them over till they pour out of the lips with the fluency and precision of water out of a pump. When there are a number at the same stage in their studies, they repeat their lesson word for word after the teacher, sitting in wide rows before him, and all chanting with the same emphasis and apparently in the same key. The effect is very singular when a string of sonorous Pali versicles is being mouthed over in the striking intoned recitative peculiar to these formulæ. The twenty or thirty boys crouching down on their knees, their little heads every now and then bowing down to the ground over their hands joined in supplication, the yellow-robed monk sitting cross-legged on the dais before them, repeating in abrupt, jerky fashion the clauses of the form of worship, which the childish voices instantly catch up, forms a scene which never loses its novelty and attractiveness.

The little school-boy slowly learns all these formulæ. Even near and in the larger towns of Lower Burma the amount of secular learning, arithmetic, and so on that is learnt, is of the most meagre possible description. All relates to the tenets of religion—to the existences and teachings of the Lord Buddha. The things thus impressed on the youthful mind sink deep into the memory, and leave their mark on the whole future life of the young scholars. As long as these monastic schools are attended, all attacks on the Buddhist faith must be fruitless.

Besides the commandments, the payah-shekhoh, and the

pareht-yohp thee, the lauds of the Lord Buddha, and the aspirations to be repeated at the holy shrines, the formulæ to be told over on the beads; besides these first principles, the young Burman is taught the thin-kee-ya, the rules which are to prepare him for assuming the yellow robe, and to guide him during his longer or shorter withdrawal from the sinful world to the calm tranquillity of the monastery. He must learn that the young novice carefully imitates the decorous pace of the yahan; does not walk fast; avoids swinging his hands; does not smile or laugh in passing through a village, and keeps far away from all secular amusements. The yellow robe, distinctive of the order, is to be regarded not as a garment to cherish and comfort the wearer, not as a robe to adorn the outward man and make it look stately or pious, but merely as a concession to modesty, born of the weaknesses of poor human flesh—and further, as a means of enabling the worthless frame to endure the extremes of heat and cold. In the same way food is to be eaten only to support life. The member of the sacred order must not think of meal times as of an occasion for gratifying his senses; he must avoid dwelling on the tastiness of the food and the gratification to his palate which the pious zeal of a supporter may afford in presenting an unusually dainty meal. Especially must he refrain from eating food to make himself strong and lusty. He must always remember the transitoriness, the misery and unreality of the world, and find relief in the Triple Consolation, the trust in the Lord, the Law, and the Assembly.

All these things are impressed on the young pupil as soon as he is able to read at all, every one of them assuming the fact that as soon as he is old enough, or as soon as he has gone through the necessary preparation, he will assume the yellow robe of the devout, to wear it

perhaps for life, perhaps only for a day or two, but certainly to put it on, for without this he cannot attain to the full privileges of a man. His kan will be altogether onesided. All the ill deeds he does will swell the sum of his demerits, but not a single good action, no uttermost act of charity or devotion, will be recorded to his advantage for another existence. Without admission to the order, without "Buddhist baptism," no man can count his present existence as other than an animal's. The great gift of having appeared in the likeness of a human being; the happy balancing of merits and demerits which has resulted in so glorious an opportunity of advancing towards neh'-ban; the still greater fortune of existence in a country where the tenets of Buddhism offer supreme chances to the weary seeker after rest from the moil of a work-a-day world; all will have been recklessly thrown away. It is written that more hardly will a needle cast from the summit of Mount Myemmoh across the wide Thamohddaya Sea, more hardly will it touch with its point as it falls another needle standing point upwards in the great Southern Island, than will any given creature become a human being. How are the Western foreigners, black and white, to be pitied, who have indeed by earnest strivings attained the seat of man, but, arrived there, find it all naught because they do not hear the teachings of the Buddha! How much worse the Burman, to whom all his life long the monastery door stands open, to whom a week's, a day's, an hour's sojourn would offer boundless possibilities, and yet who enters not in. If this be so, what then can be the prospect for the boy who having put his hand to the plough turns back, who entering the monastery as a child, imbibes the religious thoughts and becomes acquainted with the religious creed, and yet fails to seek the "humanity" so easily to be gained? Better have

been born an animal or an Englishman, and scoffed at what he did not understand.

Consequently it may be invariably assumed that the little scholar, as soon as age and acquirements admit, puts on the yellow garb as a finish to his education. This used to include every one. Till the English came and took the country, everybody went to the Pohngyee Kyoung.. But now there are English government schools; there are Burmese laymen's schools, which neglect religious education altogether, and look to competitive examinations as the end and aim of juvenile existence, as the neh'ban of school life. There is a percentage of thirty-five in the "middle standard" (Government Education Department). What matters if the successful halt and stumble in the pareht-gyee? There are two boys who have a chance in the Calcutta University Matriculation Examinations. It is a matter of indifference that the thingyoh is as unknown to them as it is to any poor foreigner. Nevertheless, notwithstanding their shortcomings in this respect, there are but few even of these young Burmans who have not become members of the society, if only for long enough to get their heads shaved and be invested with the yellow dress. Still in these latter years there are a few who have never gone through even this slight ceremony, and the number may be expected annually to increase as Western habits spread more widely over the country. Not till the monastic schools begin to be deserted will the Christian missionary find that his labours have had any effect on the vital energies of the ancient faith of the Buddha. That day is still far off. As yet the government and vernacular lay schools have had very little effect in reducing the number of scholars who go daily to study in the dim-lighted schoolrooms of the monastery. Not even in Rangoon have the monks to call for scholars; they flock there abundantly of their own accord.

CHAPTER III.

BUDDHIST BAPTISM.

THE term baptism as applied to a youth who enters a monastery in the state of probation (called shin) is not, as many people think, a mere idle analogy borrowed from the Christian faith. The novice actually and formally receives a new name to mark his accession to the full dignity of humanity. The great majority of shins, or koyins, are little boys of twelve or a little older, but occasionally a man secludes himself from the world at an advanced age. Till a Buddhist has entered the fraternity he cannot claim to be more than a mere animal. He has a loo nameh, it is true, a worldly name, but so might any ox, or horse, or elephant. It is not till he has subjected himself to the discipline of the kyoung that he can reap the fruits of a holy past and look forward to a more glorious future.

> "The devils in the underworlds wear out
> Deeds that were wicked in an age gone by."

Man has less innocence than the animals, and cannot, like them, progress by merely omitting to sin. He may make golden stairways of his weaknesses indeed, but before he can do so he must abandon the world, if it is only for twenty-four hours. Then he becomes an oopathaka, a believer, and towards another life will hold the gain as

well as answer for the loss in the present one, death casting up the debit or credit.

> "Higher than Indra's ye may lift your lot,
> And sink it lower than the worm or gnat."

In recognition of this new-gained power the novice drops his secular name and receives a bwè, an honorific title, to mark that it is now open to him to escape from suffering. The name lapses when he returns to the world again, but it is sufficient that he has once borne it. He may now add to his kan, and gain for himself a glorious new life by good works.

This is what is meant by calling the ceremony a baptism. The bwè are almost invariably Pali, or Burmanised Pali names, and follow the same rules with regard to initial letters as the Joo nameh. Thus a Moung Poh Myat, born on Thursday, might take the name of Pyinya-Zawta, while the bwè of a Sunday child, Moung An, would be Adehsa. This religious or Buddhist (on the analogy of Christian) name is of course retained by the regular members of the monastery, and a monk is never addressed by any other, when a name is used at all. When he becomes old an Oo is added as Oo Adehsa, but it must not be forgotten that the use of a person's name in addressing him is considered very far from being polite in Burma, especially to one of rank and dignity such as a mendicant. On the other hand one who has returned to the world never uses the bwè, not even when he accomplishes some great religious work such as the foundation of a pagoda, which according to a comforting belief ensures passage to neh'ban after death.

The entry into the monastic order is therefore certainly the most important event in the life of a Burman, since only under the robe of the recluse and in the abandon-

ment of the world can he completely fulfil the law and hope to find the way to eventual deliverance from the miser yof ever-recurring existences. The popular time for the ceremony is just at the beginning of Wah, the Buddhist Lent, which lasts from July to October, roughly speaking. Strict Buddhists make their sons stay throughout the whole Wah. During that season feasts, though they do occur, are very much discountenanced, and dramatic performances are energetically denounced by the religious.

According to the letter of the law the intending probationers should have reached the age of fifteen, but this regulation has almost entirely lapsed in Lower Burma, among other reasons chiefly because that is just the most important age for the boy to be learning English and arithmetic, with a view to getting situations under Government or in English merchants' offices. Therefore in the vast majority of cases shin-pyoo thee takes place at the age of twelve, or perhaps even a year earlier.

If the boy has been a scholar in the monastery beforehand, he is sure to be already prepared in all that is required of him. If not, he gets a few hasty lessons in the duties that will be incumbent on him. He must address a full member of the order in such and such language; he must walk decorously through the streets, keeping his eyes fixed on the ground six feet before him, and on no account gaze round him, no matter what excitement may be going on; he must wear his thingan and doo-goot in the prescribed fashion; he must eat with dignity and circumspection, and so on." All these details are set forth in most minute fashion in a code. When he has mastered the most essential portions, and has also given proof of an acquaintance with the ordinary forms of worship, all is ready. His horoscope now comes

into requisition, and a Baydin-Sayah or Pohnna is called in to determine a lucky day and hour from the za-dah. When this has been settled, three or four girls, the intending koyin-galay's sisters, or friends of the family, dress themselves up in their finest silks and jewels—often borrowing a large quantity of the latter—and go round the town, announcing to all relatives, friends, and neighbours when the induction will take place, and inviting them to the feast, presenting the little packet of le'-pet usual on such occasions. Almost all of these send some little present, either of money or victuals, to aid in the feast and make it as grand as possible. Not unseldom, if somebody else's son is also going to enter the kyoung and the town is not very large, the two join forces, while occasionally as many as half a dozen unite, especially if the families are not well off.

On the appointed day the young neophyte dresses in his finest clothes, and loads himself with all the family gold chains and jewellery, and as much more as he can borrow for the occasion. He then mounts a pony or gets into a richly decorated car. Shaded by gold umbrellas, allowed on this occasion only in Upper Burma, except to those who have got a special patent for them from the sovereign, he passes at a foot's pace through the village. A band of music goes before; all his friends and relatives crowd round him decked in their gayest; the young men dancing and singing vigorously; the girls laughing and smiling, with powdered faces and brilliant dresses. Thus he goes in succession to the houses of his relations to do them the obeisance due from a younger member of the family, and to bid them farewell. They in turn contribute money towards the expense of the band, and the solace of the supernumeraries. This triumphant march is meant to symbolise the moung-shin's abandon-

ment of the follies of this world, and to recall Prince Theidat's last splendid appearance in Kapilawoot, amidst a crowd of rejoicing clansmen and subjects, just previous to his abandonment of family and kingdom to become a homeless mendicant ascetic, and to obtain the Buddha-ship under the bawdee tree. When the round of visits has been duly carried out, the procession turns back to the parents' house, where in the meantime the final preparations for the induction and subsequent feast have been concluded. The head of the kyoung to which the young postulants are to be admitted, together with several of his brother monks, are seated at the back of the room on a raised dais, in front of which are ranged the presents intended for the mendicants—heaps of fruit, cooked food, mats, yellow cloth, and so on. The "Talapoins" seated in a row carefully hold up the large lotos-leaf-shaped fans before their faces to shut out from view the female portion of the assemblage. Never is the command to the holy community not to look on woman more necessary and more arduous to observe than at a shin-pyoo pwè. Burma's fairest daughters are assembled, bright in rainbow skirts and neckerchiefs, drowsy-scented flowers in the jetty tresses, jewellery flashing on the bosom, the fingers, and ears, the fragrance of thana'kah lingering over the smiling faces. Terrible trial it is for the young monk, if any such there be in the geing ohk's following, and more imperative the concentration of the mind on the Payeht Gyee and other portions of the sacred writ which are loudly chanted as the postulants return, and the assembly shekhoes to the pohngyees, and settles down to observe the proceedings. The boy throws off all his fine clothes and jewellery, and binds a piece of white cloth round his loins. Then his long hair is cut off close to the head. Often the locks are as much as three or four feet long and are

carefully preserved by the mother or sister, the latter often making them up into ta-soo, the tails of hair twisted in with her own to increase the size of her sa-dohn—the knot of hair she wears at the back of her head. When the hair has been cut, the head is carefully shaved, the boy holding it over a cloth held by some of his relations. After this the head is washed in the usual way with a decoction of the seeds and bark of the kin-bohn thee, and rubbed well with saffron. A bath is then taken and once more he puts on the bright pasoh, and repairs to the presence of the monks. Near at hand the parents have set ready the thingan, belt, ko-woot, and other yellow robes, the begging pot and other requisites of the shin. The boy comes forward, prostrates himself three times, raises his hands joined in reverence, and begs, in a Pali formula got up by heart, to be admitted to the Holy Assembly as a neophyte, that he may walk steadily in the path of perfection, enjoy the advantages which result therefrom, and finally attain to be blessed state of neh'ban. The kyoung pohgoh with his own hands gives him the garments; he is duly robed; the thabeht is hung round his neck by the strap, and then it is announced formally that he is a member of the monastery. He falls in among the other novices who have come with the mendicants. The abbot perhaps exhorts the assemblage for a short time, and then rising while all the people do obeisance, walks off slowly to the monastery, whither the newly-appointed ko-yins follow him, not unlikely helping to carrying the presents which have been given at their induction.

The feast at the parents' house begins immediately, and of course ends in a pwè, which lasts till dawn. Sometimes, though this is very seldom the case even in Rangoon, the young probationer comes back again the same night and assumes the lay dress. This *pro forma* observance of

the ceremony of baptism is however vehemently opposed by all the monks who are worth anything. A few boys remain only twenty-four hours in the yellow dress, long enough to enable them to go once at least round the village begging from door to door in the train of the yahans. This naturally is very little better than leaving the kyoung immediately. It is considered hardly decent for the shin to leave under seven days of professed membership of the community. Some stay longer—a fortnight, a month, or two months; but all the more earnest believers insist that their sons shall remain at least one Wah, throughout the four months of Lent, in the rainy season. The best course for a fervent Buddhist, who nevertheless does not feel himself adapted for a monkish life, is to stay over three Wahs, one Lent for his father, one for his mother, and one for himself. It is on account of the importance of the Wah to the shin-pyoo that most inductions take place at the beginning of that season Yahans count their seniority by the number of Lents they have spent in the kyoung. A mendicant of twenty Wahs must shekhoh to one of twenty-five, and so on. An individual who has left the holy community to re-enter the world is called a loo-twet, a runaway. On the other hand, a man who has been married, and has afterwards entered the monastery, goes by the name of taw-twet, one who has fled from the jungle of the world. The most revered yahans are those who have held steadfastly by the blameless, austere life of the fraternity since the time when they were first admitted as koyin-galay. Such are called ngè-byoo, white, or stainless from youth, and if they attain to advanced age are always sure of a most splendid ceremonial funeral, whether they have been celebrated for piety and learning or not.

If the shin-pyoo stays on in the kyoung, he continues

the same course of studies as he began as a scholar. If he has not already learnt the Payeht Gyee and the Payah Shekho, Pali sermons and forms of worship, or the Mingala Thoht, the "Buddhist Beatitudes," he applies himself to them now. The most advanced pore over the metaphysical mysteries of the Abeedhamma Konit-gyan, the seven books of the most difficult part of the Beetaghat. These, with the Thingyoh and Thaddah, afford ample room for consideration to the longest life. The modern system of shortened sojourn in the kyoungs has led to very imperfect and limited knowledge of these treasuries of sacred knowledge. Formerly it used to be said that the man who did not know the Thaddah, the Pali "grammar," knew nothing. If this position were insisted on now, the number of ignorant people in Lower Burma would be somewhat startling.

But there are many difficulties before you get to the Abeedhamma and its cognate subjects. Even in the Payeht Gyee there is a section called Ta-zet, or Ta-zet-thoht, which has the credit of sending many a probationer back to the noisy, sinful world. According to the couplet—

> "Shin pyet ta-zet,
> Loo pyet a-yet."
>
> "Brandy sends a man to hell;
> Ta-zet spoils the saint as well."

Besides prosecuting his religious studies, the shin is required also to attend on the pohngyees and minister to their wants. He must lay before them at fixed times their daily food, the proper supply of water, the well-used betel-box, and whatever else the monk may require. He must of course go round every morning with the other members of the monastery, the begging bowl strapped round his neck, accepting meekly, without word of thanks,

or glance thrown to the right or left, even when he passes his father's house, the food poured in by the pious. When a pohngyee goes abroad, the neophyte may be required to follow, carrying his fan or umbrella, or perhaps an armload of palm-leaf books, if a function is to be performed anywhere. According to the strict letter of the law the ko-yin ought to eat only of the food presented in the morning, but a very great laxity has crept in in this respect, not only with the neophytes, but even among the professed members of the order. It is no uncommon thing for the parents of the youth to send in daily a special meal for him, or even, in the case of wealthy families, actually to keep a cook on the monastic premises to prepare his food. Such sybaritism is not by any means uncommon in Lower Burma, though even there hardly approved of. In any good monastery in Upper Burma, or indeed in any monastery at all, even in Mandalay, it would be promptly put a stop to. But where the monks themselves show the example of carnal weakness, the probationers cannot be expected to maintain the old austerity.

The shin is subject in every way to the discipline of the monastery, but there are very few additional rules really incumbent on him. He has to observe always the Tsèba Theela, the ten commandments. Five of these are obligatory on all Buddhists at all times; the other five are supposed to be incumbent upon laymen only on sacred days and during Lent. The five universal commandments are:—

1. Thou shalt not take any life at all.
2. Thou shalt not steal.
3. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
4. Thou shalt not lie.
5. Thou shalt not drink intoxicating liquor.

The additional five are :—

6. Thou shalt not eat after midday.
7. Thou shalt not sing, dance, or play on any musical instrument.
8. Thou shalt not use cosmetics, or colour the face.
9. Thou shalt not sit, stand, or sleep on platforms or elevated places, not proper for thee.
10. Thou shalt not touch gold or silver.

These latter five are, it has been said, imposed upon laymen on sacred days, but the burden is very light, the people observing them or not, accordingly as they are observing the "duty-day." If they are not "keeping the feast," they conduct themselves precisely as they would on any other day, and buy and sell and attend pwès in their ordinary fashion.

This laxity is, of course, not open to the shins, but it cannot be said that the regulations, except perhaps as to eating, are very irksome. The seventh and eighth commandments seem by themselves peculiar, but they refer to filthy habits more explicitly set forth in the Pateemouk, or book of the enfranchisement, containing the 227 sins which a monk is liable to commit. The ninth refers to the common Oriental dislike to any person of insufficient dignity occupying an elevated place physically above worthier people.

So far, then, the shin is not very grievously burdened in the monastery. But the discipline maintained is very strict. None of the ko-yins or of the boarder-pupils must be out of the monastic limits after the bell has rung. A lay scholar may get permission from the kyoung poh-goh to sleep at home now and again, but this indulgence is naturally impossible to the neophyte; he must always

stay in the monastery. Again, the boarders may run home in the afternoon to get some dinner at their parents' houses, but this the shin cannot do. Breaches of the rules are very severely punished. The culprit's hands are tied high above his head to a post, and the castigator lays on vigorously on the naked back with a stout bamboo. Cases of deliberate cruelty of course occasionally happen, for human nature is the same everywhere, and a Dotheboys Hall is not an entire figment; but they are rare, and on the whole the shin is happy in the monastery, and occasionally in later life looks back with regret to the old, quiet, unruffled, careless life of the pohngyee kyoung.

In Upper Burma it has actually been his school, for but very few adopt the system of having private teachers to instruct their children; and in Lower Burma it probably contrasts favourably with the uncomfortable hard benches and desks of the English institution, and the still more irksome quietness demanded, and steady, prolonged application exacted by the English teacher. Those who have been to both remember most fondly the long dusky monastery schoolroom, where they sat on the floor and shouted out their lessons, and now and again slipped out into the air to take the stiffness out of their limbs with a quarter of an hour at chin lohn, Burmese football. In the English school you learned to make money; in the Burmese school you learned to be happy and contented.

CHAPTER IV.

LIFE IN THE MONASTERY.

A LITTLE before daylight, "when there is light enough to see the veins in the hand," that is to say, in Burma, at half-past five in the morning, in accordance with the deena chareeya, the whole monastic community rises, awakened by the sound of the kaladet. This is a big, oblong, trough-shaped bell, made of a piece of wood hollowed out, with little chiselled holes on the side. It is beaten with a wooden mallet, and makes noise enough to rouse the heaviest sleeper. The yahan then rinses out his mouth, washes his hands and face, arranges his dress, the same in which he has slept all night, and recites a few pious precepts, chief among which is the morning prayer: "How great a favour has the Lord Buddha bestowed upon me in manifesting to me his law, through the observance of which I may escape hell and secure my salvation."

There are always a few sleepy boarders, or shins, who have been indulging in the dissipation of whispered conversations till far into the night, whom nothing but a personal attack will awaken, but they are soon shaken up, and then the entire community arranges itself before the image of the Buddha, the abbot at the head, the rest of the brotherhood, pyin-sins, novices, and scholars, according

to their order, and all together intone the morning service. This done, they each in their ranks present themselves before the kyoung poh-goh, and pledge themselves to observe during the day the vows and precepts incumbent upon them. They then separate for a short time, the pupils and shins to sweep the floor of the kyoung, and bring a supply of drinking water for the day, filter it, and place it ready for use; the more advanced novices and others of full rank to sweep round the sacred trees and water them; the elders to meditate in solitude on the regulations of the order. Meditation is beyond all other actions meritorious. The first meditation of the day should be on the miseries of life and the conviction that we cannot free ourselves from them; such thoughts are honourable beyond the founding of a pagoda, or praying for the salvation of all living creatures. Some gather flowers and offer them before the pagoda, to impress upon the mind the virtues of the great teacher and the weaknesses and shortcomings of human nature.

Then comes the first meal of the day, a light refection usually preceded by a homily or grace, to the effect that the rice is eaten not to please the appetite, but to satisfy the wants of the body; that the yellow habit is worn not for vanity, but to cover nakedness; that they dwell in this house not for vain glory, but to be protected from the inclemency of the weather; that medicine is taken merely to recover health, and that health is desirable only that they may attend with greater diligence to prayer and meditation. After the meal all proceed to study for an hour. The ko-yins repeat what lessons they have learnt and apply themselves to new tasks. The early morning is considered especially favourable for committing to memory.

It is now close on eight o'clock, and, arranging them-

selves in Indian file, they set forth in orderly procession, with the abbot at their head, to beg their food. Slowly they wend their way through the chief street of the town or village, halting when any one comes out to pour his contribution of rice, or fruit, or vegetables, into the alms-bowl, but never saying a word, or even raising the eyes from the ground. It is they who confer the favour, not the givers. Were it not for the passing of the mendicants, the charitable would not have the opportunity of gaining for themselves merit. Not even a glance rewards the most bounteous donation. With eyes fixed unwaveringly on the ground six feet before them, and hands clasped beneath the begging-bowl, they pass on, solemnly meditating on their own unworthiness and the vileness of all human things. There are naturally certain places where they receive a daily dole; but should the open-handed good wife have been delayed at the bazaar, chatting with her gossips, or the pious old head of the house be away on a journey, the recluses would rather go without breakfast than halt for a second, as if implying that they remembered the house as an ordinary place of call. It is a furlong on the noble path lost to the absentees, and the double ration of the following day is noted without a phantom of acknowledgment. So they pass round, circling back to the monastery after a perambulation lasting perhaps an hour or an hour and a half. Some mendicants, especially the more austere, return as soon as their thabehts are well filled; others apparently walk for a certain fixed time, and if the bowl is filled before this time is over, they empty it carefully on the side of the road. This is not wastry; the food is eaten by the dogs and birds of the air, and the merit to the givers is the same.

On their arrival at the monastery, a portion of all the alms they have received on the tour is solemnly offered to

the Buddha, and then all proceed to breakfast. In former times, and according to the strict letter of the law, this ought to consist solely of what has been received during the morning; but a very great number of monasteries have, sad to say, fallen away from the strictness of the old rule. Only the more austere abbots enforce the observance of the earlier asceticism. Certainly in the great majority of the kyoungs of Lower Burma there is a man, not a monk, called kappeeyadayaka, or supporter, who provides for them a much more delicate and better dressed meal than they would have if they ate of the miscellaneous conglomerate turned out of the alms-bowl. That indiscriminate mixture of rice, cooked and raw; peas, boiled and parched; fish, flesh, and fowl, curried and plain, usually wrapped separately, in plantain leaves; cocoa-nut cakes and cucumbers; mangoes and meat; is very seldom consumed, in the larger towns at any rate, by any but the most rigidly austere. It is handed over to the little boys, the scholars of the community, or to any wanderers who may be sojourning in the kyoung, who eat as much of it as they can, and give the rest to the crows and pariah dogs. The abbot and the pyin-sin find a smoking hot breakfast ready prepared for them when they return from their morning's walk, and are ready to set to with healthy appetites. This question of Sybaritism is a chief source of dispute between the rival sects of Maha and Soola-gandee.

Breakfast done, they wash out the begging-bowls, and chant a few lauds before the image of the Buddha, meditating for a short time on kindness and affection. During the succeeding hour the scholars are allowed to play about, but must not make a noise, or indulge in quarrelsome games; the religious pass the time in leisurely conversation, or in any other way they please; the kyoung poh-goh usually has visits from old people, who come to pay their

respects, or perhaps the kyoung-tagah, the founder of the monastery, the patron of his benefice, comes to consult with him on various matters, or to converse about religion and good works. The etiquette observed on these occasions is always very stately and ceremonious. Whoever approaches, whether it be the poorest villager, the founder of the monastery, or the governor of the district, all alike must prostrate themselves three times before the yahan, and, with uplifted hands, say, "In order that all the sins I have committed, in thought, in word, or in deed, may be pardoned to me, I prostrate myself three times, once in honour of the Buddha, again in honour of the Law, and thirdly in honour of the Assembly, the three precious things. By so doing, I hope to be preserved from the three calamities, from the four states of punishment; and from the five enemies, fire, water, thieves, governors (literally translated burdens) and malevolent people." The sayah replies: "As a reward for his merit and his obeisances, may the supporter (tagah) be freed from the three calamities, the four states of punishment, the five enemies, and from harm of what kind soever. May all his aims be good and end well; may he advance firmly in the noble path, perfect himself in wisdom, and finally obtain rest in neh'ban." Whenever the visitor addresses the yahan he joins his hands together, and being seated of course, slightly bends the body forward, applying to him the title of payah, or lord, and making use of the honorific forms of speech specially reserved for the religious. The mendicant on his part calls the layman, of whatever rank, tagah, supporter, or, if the visitor be a woman, tăgama. Somehow or other these conversations, like the addresses of the religious to the people in the rest-houses, always seem to come round to the subject of the merit of almsgiving. The recluse will say that whatever is presented, silk robe,

mattress, pillow, betel-box, is purified by the merit of the alms deed. The poor could fill the Lord Buddha's begging-bowl with a handful of flowers; the rich could not do so with a hundred, a thousand, ten thousand measures of grain. The path in the noontide heat is hard to one who has no sandals, and no water-gourd. What, then, will be the path after death to one who has not charity and regard for the ten precepts! Alms deeds can defend a man and protect him against the influence and the sources of demerits which are man's true enemies. Liberality is chief among the ten great virtues; it is the second of the three works of perfection; it is the absolute soul of the five renouncements. With all these a man becomes a Buddha, without them he sinks to be an animal, or worse still, to the fiery chambers of hell.

When the conversation is over the layman bows down three times again, saying, "My Lord's disciple does obeisance;" or Oo tin ba thee "thinks on his forehead" rises, backs five or ten paces, and then turning on the right, as he would at the pagoda, departs. There may be quite a long succession of these visitors, and their respects are paid all through the afternoon, if the weather be not too hot.

At half-past eleven, however, there is another meal, usually a light refection of fruits, and this is the last of the day. The pyin-sin are expressly forbidden to eat after noon. Solid food taken after the shadows slope to the east endangers purity. The blood becomes heated, and moreover when the stomach is loaded the mind becomes overclouded and unfitted for meditation. It is worthy of remark that the religious must eat as they walk, slowly and with gravity, only putting moderate sized morsels into the mouth, and constantly bearing in mind that food is not intended for the gratification of the flesh but for the

nourishment of the body. The ceremony called a-kat must also be carefully observed, in accordance with the precise instructions laid down in the Weenee. When a monk wants anything he must not go and get it for himself, nor direct any one in as many words to bring it to him. He must say to an attendant shin, or scholar, "Do what is lawful," whereupon the food is brought him, and the shin kneels down at a distance of a couple of feet, and, making the customary salutation, says, "This is lawful." The yahan then either takes it from his hand or directs him to place it within reach. The same ceremony is observed in everything, whether the religious wants water to wash his face or hands or to rinse out his mouth, or his sandals and fan when he goes out, or when offerings are made to him by the pious. The desire is of course to impart dignity to all the monk does, and to repress covetousness and inordinate carnal desires, and the custom dates from the very foundation of the order.

After the noontide meal all return to work again. A certain number undertake the teaching of the boys, who are at all stages of learning, from the Thin-bohng-gyee, the spelling-book, up to the Koyins, who, in accordance with the law, are learning the Weenee, the Whole Duty of the Monk, by heart, with a view to abandoning the world and adopting the religious life. Others set to work to read old texts and the commentaries on them, or go to superintend the professional writers who are copying out manuscripts, carefully scratching on the palm-leaves with sharp steel style. The pyin-sin themselves never do anything of the kind. The writers are all professionals, laymen, and almost without exception from Upper Burma. The sadeik, the carved and gilded box containing the palm-leaf books, stands in the central room near the images, and often shaded by a sacred umbrella. When a learned

sadaw makes notes, or writes a commentary of his own, he dictates it all to these copyists, who afterwards engross it. Most of the older members of the kyoung do, however, what an Englishman would call nothing, all the afternoon. They talk with whatever idlers—and there are always an abundance of them—come about the place, and then sink into meditation and many of the weaker of them into sleep. Meditation is the only path to the higher seats whereby a man becomes a yahanda, fit for neh'-ban, possessed of the six kinds of wisdom:—

1. The faculty of seeing like a nat or dewah.
2. The faculty of hearing like a nat.
3. Creative power.
4. Knowledge of the thoughts of others.
5. Freedom from passion.
6. Knowledge of one's own past existences.

They sit therefore for long hours fingering their rosaries, the beads made of the seeds of the *Canna indica*, "Indian shot," which sprang from Shin Gautama's blood, and repeating many times the prescribed formulæ, most often the Thamatawee Patthanah—All is changeful, all is sad, all is unreal; followed by the Tharana Gohng, the invocation of the Three Precious Gems, the Lord, the Law, and the Assembly. So by abstraction of the mind they hope to acquire the four laws of Edehpat:—

1. Absolute power over the will.
2. Absolute power over the mind.
3. Absolute power of execution.
4. Absolute power over the means to the object.

The discipline is terrible to all but a slow-minded man, and we can well imagine one who thus presents himself to the people as a living memento of all that is sacred and

perfect in the religion, longing for the extinction of neh'ban, where he may escape from the misery of recurring lives.

> "Ask of the sick, the mourners, ask of him
> Who tottereth on his staff, lone and forlorn,
> Liketh thee life? These say, The babe is wise
> That weepeth being born."

So each one in the brotherhood passes the time each afternoon: some asleep, some racking the brain with mystical musings, some learning, some teaching, while throughout all sounds the din of the schoolroom, where the pupils are shouting out their tasks at the top of their voices.

Between three and four the lessons are finished, and the shins and scholars perform any domestic duties that may be required about the monastery. This done, the day-scholars go home and have their dinner, a few of the boarders perhaps gaining permission to do the same. The ko-yins, being under monastic discipline, are obliged to fast like their superiors. Most of them, and some few of the pohngyees, go out for a staid and solemn walk round the village and out to the pagoda. Then, at sunset, the unmelodious, far-reaching notes of the kaladet summon all back to the kyoung. The strollers return immediately. None wearing the yellow robe may be without the monastery limits after the sun goes down, which occurs throughout the whole year close upon six o'clock. A short time afterwards the scholars are summoned before the abbot or some of the pohngyees and recite steadily all that they have learned, from the Thin-bohng-gyee up to the book they have last committed to memory. If the kyoung is large and there are a number of students, this thorough process is, however, modified, and only the work at the moment being learned is required of the pupils. The Pali

rituals are chanted with spasmodic energy, abundance of sound in most cases doing duty for a just comprehension of the matter. Very few of the religious could string a sentence together in Pali, far less speak the language, yet most of them can pour forth homilies and dogmata for hours on end, so that the poor ko-yins are not to be scoffed at for their parrot-like volubility. When this examination is over, if the sayah is an enthusiast, or if there is time, that dignitary himself delivers a sermon, or gives an exposition of some knotty passage, or perhaps there is a general conversation on some question of doctrine, or other subject of ecclesiastical interest at the moment.

Thus the time passes away till half-past eight or nine when the evening is closed with devotions in the presence of the image of the Buddha. All assemble according to their rank as in the morning, and together intone the vesper lauds. When the last sounds of the mournful chant have died away in the dimly-lighted chamber, one of the novices, or a clever scholar, stands up, and with a loud voice proclaims the hour, the day of the week, the day of the month, and the number of the year. Then all shekhoh before the Buddha thrice, and thrice before the abbot, and retire to rest. None who have experienced the impressiveness of this ceremonial, called the Thah-thanah-hlyouk, will readily forget the powerful effect it has on the feelings. It is the fit ending of a day full of great possibilities for all. If the same routine gone through day after day becomes monotonous and loses some of its power for good, yet the effect of such a school, presided over by an abbot of intelligence and earnestness, must infallibly work for the good of all connected with it, and especially so in the case of an impulsive, impressionable people like the Burmese. As long as all the men of the country pass

through the kyoungs, the teachings of Western missionaries can have but little power to shake the power of Buddhism over the people. The moral truths of both religions, Christianity and Buddhism, are practically the same, and who can give proof of aught else without calling in the aid of faith? The Burman is convinced that no other creed will suit him so well, and the number of monasteries in all parts of the country renders it easy for every one to obtain entrance for his children. The king sends his sons to the kyoung, and the poorest and most sinful wretch need not fear that his child will be turned away from the gates. Teaching is really all the pyin-sin do for the people; but it is precisely this moderate amount of teaching, revealing as it does to all the stern simplicity of the monastic life, that keeps the faith active in the country. Many monks are supremely lazy, but so are many of their fellow-countrymen, and if you are bidden by the Law to meditate deeply on the nature of mind and matter, of Nahm and Rupa, of Seht and Sehdathit, of Thissa and Zan, it is certain that you cannot be actively employed on other less important matters.

CHAPTER V.

TATTOOING.

WHATEVER his parents may think, the Burman youth considers the tattooing of his thighs quite as important a matter as his entry into a monastery. If he attains to the full dignity of humanity by becoming a shin, it is no less settled in his own mind that till he is tattooed in proper fashion there may be doubts as to his thorough manhood. Accordingly, very often at a tender age, varying with the spiritedness of his character, he begins to get figures tattooed on various parts of his thighs. When the operation is finished, the whole body from the waist, in a line with the navel, downwards to just beyond the knee-cap, is completely covered, the effect to the eye being not so much of a marking of the cuticle as of a skin-tight pair of *caleçons*, fitting better than the best glove ever made. The origin of the custom may or may not be the disgusting reason assigned by foreign writers. No true Burman believes it. But in any case the tattooing looks very well on the olive skin, and I have heard English ladies admire it. The custom will probably never die out. There are, it is true, not a few puny Rangoonites, spiritless sons of the town, who do not get tattooed, but they are ashamed of it and take every opportunity of concealing their weakness. But there is not a single up-country man,

not a solitary taw-thah, the sturdy inhabitants of the small towns and villages, who is not decorated with the dark blue tracery. They would as soon think of wearing a woman's skirt as of omitting to be tattooed, and they are strengthened in the feeling by the opinion of the girls themselves.

The operation is not by any means pleasant. In fact in places such as the tender inside parts of the thigh and at the joints of the knee, it needs more stoicism than most fellows can command to endure it without relieving the mind in speech. Therefore it is common to put the boy under the influence of opium while it is being done, though some parents will not allow this, for cases have occurred where the youth has died of an over-dose. For the same reason it is very seldom that more that three or four figures are done at a time. The part swells up a good deal, and there is danger of fever; besides that a few days afterwards the itchiness which supervenes is almost as intolerable as the first tattooing, while if the skin is broken by scratching there is not only a nasty sore but the figure is spoilt. You not uncommonly hear of cases where the whole surface was finished at one sitting, but you only hear of them because it is unusual, and because the youth is proud of it.

The instrument used is a pricker about two feet long, weighted at the top with a brass figure, sometimes plain, but in the case of good sayahs, always carved more or less elaborately in the figure of a bird, a nat or a beeloo. The yat, or style part, is solid, with a round, sharp point, split up into four by long slits at right angles to each other, which serve to hold the colouring matter. This style is about four inches long and fits into a hollow pipe, which again joins it to the weighted end. Thus the length required for free work is gained without too great weight,

except where it is wanted. The say sayah catches the pricker with his right hand, and guides the point with a rest formed by the fore-finger and thumb of his left, the hand resting firmly on the person's body. The say used is lampblack, the best being that obtained by the burning of sessamum oil, and this is mixed with water as it is wanted. Good sayahs always sketch the outline of the figure roughly on the skin with an ordinary camel's-hair brush, and then the pattern is executed with a series of punctures close together, forming what afterwards fades into a rough line. Skilful men are very quick at it. I have had fifteen figures done in little over half an hour. But then Sayah Chehn is a celebrated man.

The figures tattooed are those of all kind of animals, tigers, cats, monkeys, and elephants being the commonest, while nats, beeloos, and compound animals called tiger-beeloos are also frequent. Each representation is surrounded by a roughly oval tracery of a variety of letters of the alphabet, which form a curious and remarkably effective frame. Thus each animal has a setting of its own. Vacant spaces are filled up in a similar way, and the top and bottom are finished off with a scolloped line. Sometimes these letters are asserted to have a cabalistic meaning, but ordinarily no greater virtue is claimed for them than that of beauty. Mystic squares and ladder-step triangles of serious import are often added in vacant spaces, but all the more important and valid charms are reserved for other parts of the body and for special execution, usually too in vermilion. The old style, and that which prevails still in jungle districts, was to cover every available piece of skin with tracery, so that the figures became blurred and indistinct, and on a dark skin grown old were practically not visible without careful examination, which, considering the portion of the body, was embarrassing to both

parties. The newer style, and that specially affected by those with a white skin, is to sacrifice mass of colour to distinctness of outline. The best sayahs carry about sample-books with them containing clever drawings, from which the patient may select the patterns he likes best, and mark their relative positions before he takes the opium. But tigers, cats, monkeys, and beeloos always predominate. To fill up space, and for greater certainty, the name of the animal is often added in the figure, after the style of juvenile art on slates, or with a piece of chalk on blank hoardings.

The Shans tattoo even more extensively than the Burmans. The figures are carried down well over the calf of the leg and above the navel, while from the upper line tattooed rays run up to the chest and at the back, after the fashion of a rising sun, almost to the nape of the neck. Mostly all the men who tattoo charms and cabalistic figures are Shans. They claim and are allowed a special skill in such matters, and as they mutter spells and incomprehensible incantations over the "medicine," are looked up to with profound belief and a very considerable deal of awe.

The tattooing on the loins and legs is universal with all Burmans and nothing more is ordinarily required, but there are very few who have not charms of some kind tattooed on the arms, back, chest, or even on the top of the head, which is shaved for the purpose. These figures are of all kinds—lizards, birds, mystic words and squares, rings, images of the Buddha, and sometimes merely a few scattered dots, the latter especially on the face, between the eyes, over the ears, or on the chin. The colouring matter is almost always vermilion, with drugs and solutions according to requirement, mingled with it. The blue dye from the lampblack never disappears, but the red colour of the

vermilion gradually fades away and vanishes. Nevertheless figures of this kind, more or less distinct, are to be found on Burmans of all ages, so great is the national superstition. Even the town youths, whose limbs are smooth and "unbreeched" as a girl's, are never without some charms of this kind, if it is only the a-noo say, which enables a man to gain the woman he loves. This "drug of tenderness" is composed of vermilion mixed with a variety of herbs and curious things, prominent among which is the bruised, dry skin of the touk-teh, the trout-spotted lizard, whose sonorous cry and fidelity to the house where he establishes himself and brings luck, are well-known to all who have visited Burma. It is very sparingly used, a few round spots arranged in the shape of a triangle being of sufficient virtue to ensure the object aimed at. The commonest place for them is between the eyes, but occasionally the say saya recommends the lips, or even the tongue, and his advice is always followed. This is the only tattooing which women ever have executed on them, and there are not many of them who have it done. The patient is usually a love-sick maiden who is afraid the object of her affection will escape from her, or a girl whom rolling years warn that she must be quick if she would not be condemned to remain an a-pyo heing, an old maid. Except in very desperate cases, however, they always manage to persuade the operator to place the charm on some part of the body where it will not be visible. If it is not effectual there is always open to them the signal afforded by kindly national custom to maidens longing for a mate. They cut off the lappets of hair, the bya-bazan, hanging over the ears, and the significance is the same as the white heather of the language of flowers, "heart for sale." In Rangoon the tattooing of a woman has a special signification, not recognised elsewhere. It

means that she wants an Englishman for a husband. Poor thing!

Another very universal kind of tattooing is that with a-hpee say. Almost every schoolboy in the country has a specimen of this on him, for does it not prevent him from feeling the pain when he is caned? No amount of falsified hopes in the experience of friends will persuade him that it may not be effectual in his case, and a flogging is often courted as an immediate test of its efficacy. Pride repels the inquiries of chums as to the results, but the experimenter is usually very well behaved for some time. In the case of older men the a-hpee say acts as a talisman against bullets, sword cuts, and ills of that kind. Allied to this are the thaynat hpee, which soldiers and dacoits carry about with them. These are the horns of buffaloes and other animals, which may be plain, but are usually elaborately carved with figures according to fancy. They must be quite solid down to the root. A hollow or flaw of any kind deprives them of their virtue. While the man has such a talisman in his hands he cannot be killed. A monkey is a very favourite image to have carved in this way on a sword or dagger hilt, the reference being to the tale of the Ramayana. Of a similar nature are talismans which are especially used by soldiers and dacoits. These hkoung-beht-set are charmed or consecrated objects let into the flesh under the skin. They are of various kinds. Some are gold, silver, or lead; others curious pebbles, pieces of tortoise shell, or bits of horn, all of them with incantations of mystic character written on them. Many famed dacoits have long rows and curves of them over the chest, showing in little knobs through the skin. When they get into English prisons, an energetic jailer has been known to cut them out, lest they should be pieces of gold or silver, or perhaps precious stones, with

which the turnkeys might be bribed. The usual result is to break the robber's spirit. Once the continuity is interrupted the consecration is gone. More peaceable people wear necklaces or bracelets of such talismans in the belief that they are thus proof against malignant witches and necromancers. Most Englishmen in Burma, who are on friendly terms with the people, have been asked to test the virtue of such a charm, by firing at it tied up in a handkerchief. If the incantation is valid the handkerchief will be unharmed though the muzzle of the pistol be held up to it. In such a case the pistol will burst.

Another kind of tattooing is the moay say, which guards against danger from snake bite. Similarly the a-kweh a-kah, the shielding, or defending drug, renders harmless the spells of wizards and geomancers, and keeps far away evil spirits of every kind. But the most hideous and weird of the superstitions about tattooing is that connected with the a-kyan say. There are but very few sayahs who are acquainted with the necessary drugs and incantations, and fewer people still who have the courage to submit to the operation, for many men are pointed out whose mind has given way under the gruesome process, and who wander about graveyards, gnashing their teeth and fumbling about for human bones to gnaw and mouth. And no wonder, for some tattooers make them chew the raw flesh of a man who has been hung, while the figure is being tattooed on the breast .Those who go through the operation are called Baw-dee-thah-da. Some become Baw-dee-thah-da without knowing it, and without the sickening necessity of mumbling human flesh like a ghoul. I knew an instance in a monastery. The patient was a boarder about fourteen years of age. A Shan tattooer wandering about the country spent a couple of nights in the kyoung,

and the boy, attracted by the fellow's eerie tales managed to save up a good many tit bits for him from the food going in the monastery. Out of gratitude, and having nothing better to give him, for he was very poor and homeless, the sayah tattooed on the lad a figure with singular drugs, muttering queer phrases the while. Then he went away saying no more than that it would make the boy very strong. In about a month's time the boarder displayed unmistakeable signs of being a Baw-dee-thah-da. He leapt enormous heights in the air, jumped about and ran at random, carried with the utmost ease things which no one else could move. The abbot locked him up in a sadeik, the box in which the palm leaf manuscripts were kept; he got out without injuring the lock in any way, sprang on to the roof of the monastery forty feet high, and turned a somersault to the ground without hurting himself in the least. He had been a boy of very soft, easy temper, and now he became fiery and uncertain, and with his vast strength, very dangerous. He only calmed down when a monk preached the law to him. He was constantly doing marvellous things; one day he walked across the river in front of the monastery, holding a monk's ohk, or food canister in his hands. The depth of the water was over six fathoms, but it did not reach higher than his waist. On another occasion a tree which was being cut down fell on him. He sank into the ground and came forth quite uninjured. After some years his parents took him to Magway in Upper Burma. There he fell into bad courses and became a dacoit. This was terrible for his family in a special way, because in native territory if they cannot catch the dacoit they seize all his friends and relations and put them in gaol till they can get hold of the real culprit, and no one can lay hands on a Baw-dee-thah-da. At last, however, he was restored to his right mind. A holy ascetic

came across him, soothed him with the payeht gyee, and then with a rusty nail and sacred medicines, tattooed out the figure put on with such lamentable results by the Shan sayah. The quondam Baw-dee-thah-da is now a staid and respected broker in the employ of one of the best known English rice firms in Rangoon. He was fortunate; most Baw-dee-thah-da have to be killed in their sleep.

But though Baw-dee-thah-das are very rare, charmed tattooing is not, and there are some fast young men who seem almost to make picture galleries of themselves with emblems and patterns all over their chests, arms, backs, and the calves of their legs. The colour gradually dies away until at last nothing remains but the blue breeches. These really look well, and they last a man to his dying day.

The following recipes and formulæ to be repeated during tattooing are taken from a Mandalay tattooer's book :—

For an a-noo say :—"I was Koothah Min, I. At the time when Papawadee was my queen, when I routed the kings of all the seven countries who came suing for her hand. Right beautiful was she, fair as the malla flower when it perfumes the forest with its odours. I the great Koothah Yaza."

This is to be repeated seven times at various stages in the operation. Koothah Yaza is the hero of one of the 510 Zahts, detailing the previous births of the Lord Buddha.

For an a-hpee say : "Steal gold from the pagodas, fine, bright gold. Refine it in the fire and repeat the magic words in the house, on the lonely path, before the lucky star, at the pagoda; repeat them a thousand times save one. Consecrate the water, draw the circle of the flying

galohn. Put it under the left arm, under the right arm. No harm will befal thee, safe and invulnerable."

"A parrot tattooed on the arm will give great favour with princes."

"Take a length of bamboo or of rattan the size of a joint of the merchant's finger, and repeat, pressing your foot against the tha-byay tree, Nat-thah wa-pa, wa-pa nat-thah na. Repeat this seven times and put the joint in your mouth when you are in danger. There is no better thay-nat hpee."

The merchant's finger (let thoo-guwè) is the third—that on which rings are worn. The forefinger is called let-hnoh. Hnoh means to hate, but whether this is the meaning or not—as it were "the finger of scorn"—I do not know.

"Repeat sa ba pa wa wa ba pa wa with the tooth of the wild boar in your palm, with the wild boar's ear as you know. Draw the circle with pure red gold. Draw in it a nagah; then draw sideways the figure of a flying lion. Write round it om gyoo-loo gyoo-loo thwa ha ya. Then carry rice, fresh water, betel, tobacco, and le'pet to the pagoda and heap them together. When you have repeated a thousand times the words of the encircling gahtah (spell) put it below the skin. But be careful not to give it to the first man who asks for it. It is very powerful." This is another a-hpee say.

Certain stones called amaday said to be found in the heads of birds, in trees, and in animals, are highly prized as amulets. They will guard from musket shots, or sword thrusts, from painful blows, or evil spirits. Hmaw sayahs always have them. When they are placed on a child's face, or introduced into any one's blood, nat thwin thee, they introduce a spirit. The person so possessed falls into a trance, and may be questioned as to the doings of any other evil spirits in the neighbourhood.

Letters placed in the magic squares and triangular "in" are la-gyee, na-gyee, ka-gyee, ga-gyee (great *l*, great *n*, great *k*, and great *g*). Other very powerful s'mah, as these tattooed letters are called, are "round" sa, wa, la, and "bottom-indented" da. The arm is a favourite place for them.

The belief of every Burman in the efficacy of these tattooed charms is practically ineradicable. In 1881, in Rangoon, a young man had the figure of the great Peguan byeing, the "paddy-bird," a species of egret, tattooed upon him. This was to be as efficacious in preserving him from drowning as a child's caul used to be considered by British sailors. When it was finished, he suggested that an immediate experiment should be made. Accordingly his hands and feet were tied, and he was tossed over the side of a boat into the river. The under currents in the Rangoon river are very dangerous, and the poor fellow was never seen again. The tattooers, master and assistant, were brought up on a charge of murder, and convicted of manslaughter, but the great mass of the Burman population thought they were very hardly treated, and that the fact of an unlucky side-wind, some mischance in the calculation from the horoscope, the machinations of an evil-disposed person against the deceased, or something of that kind, which had caused the lamentable issue, ought never to have led to the conviction of the skilled sayahs. That they were charlatans was never once hinted.

CHAPTER VI.

EAR-BORING.

THE first great event in a Burmese girl's life is the nah-twin mingalá, the boring of her ears. She is not out of the doll stage till that happens. She may have toddled after her mother to the market with a basket of fruit on her head, long before the ear-boring, but that ceremony is as much an epoch to her as putting on the yellow robe, or getting his legs tattooed, is to her brother. Ever afterwards she will look upon every male as a possible lover. No more taking alternate whiffs at a big green cheroot with little Moung Poh; no more teasing Poh Shun to let her have a taste of those fine nettee mangoes his father has got down from Mandalay; no more dawdling about the streets by herself, watching the small boys playing with the round gohn nyin seeds, or having a hurried glimpse of the puppet play, while she is supposed to be at home looking after the house with her little brother. When she walks out now it will be with her mother, or an aunt, or married sister, as a chaperone; and if she goes to the play it will be in formal procession, and with all her finest clothes on. Nothing like getting the ears bored to set a girl thinking about the wave of the hair that falls down in lappets by her ears, or the best recipe for the fragrant straw-coloured thanakah, with which she tints her face and

charms half the senses of the gallants. It even alters her walk. She sets about practising the coquettish sway of the body in walking, which is considered so attractive, and which a philosophical matter-of-fact Darwinian would probably declare was first of all due to an involuntary throwing out of the heel with each step to keep the folds of the dress modestly closed in front, and to prevent the dainty slipper, just covering her toes and no more, from slipping off the foot. However that may be, it is an accomplishment indispensable to a Burmese belle. She takes as much pains over it as she does with her jetty tresses. In a word, the nah-twin mingala transforms the girl into a woman, just as much as admission to a monastery makes the boy a man. It is her baptism, and is the distinctive mark of her race. Most of the men get their ears bored too, but the ceremony is not so solemn with them, and latterly is not so universal, at any rate not in British Burma.

The ceremony takes place at the age of twelve or thirteen, just when the girl has attained puberty in fact. Her za-dah is submitted to a soothsayer, that a fortunate day and hour may be chosen, and that being fixed, a great feast is prepared, and all the friends of the family and the relations are invited. An invitation to an ear-boring feast is a very urgent matter. No one can refuse without a very good excuse, and serious business is often postponed to the demands of such a ceremony. Everybody comes early, and sits down in any place he can find round about the front part and sides of the room, the girl, with all her female relatives about her, reclining on a mat at the back. The baydin sayah stalks about gazing at a mysterious strip of palm leaf, or apparently wrapped in deep thought. Beside him is the professional ear-borer. He carries the needles, which are almost always pure gold, and

even in the case of the poorest, never of any baser metal than silver. Rich people very often have them set at the ends with precious stones. At last the soothsayer gives the sign that the favourable moment has arrived. The ear-borer advances rapidly and quickly passes the needles through the lobe of the ear, sometimes using a cork as they do in England, but more often letting them pass between two of his fingers. The girl, who has been worked up into a high state of excitement and terror by all the preparations, usually struggles and shrieks as hard as she can, but the women round about hold her down, and the band of music in the street outside strikes up a rapid movement and drowns her lamentations, while all the visitors burst into a flood of talk and reminiscences of other ceremonies of the kind that they have witnessed. Usually the gold needle is bent round and left in the wound, but poor people sometimes pass a piece of string through and tie it. This is turned round and passed backwards and forwards daily till the sides heal, and then begins the process of enlarging the hole to receive the na-doung, a big tube an inch long and from half an inch to three quarters in diameter. This takes a very long time, and is less pleasant even than the first boring. Some do it with a gold or thickly gilt metal plate, which is rolled up and passed through the hole. The elasticity of the metal makes it constantly tend to expand, and so the hole is gradually enlarged. A commoner method, however, is by introducing stems of the keing, or elephant grass. As many of the little stems of the inner blade as will go through are passed in, and daily their number is added to until a considerable width is attained. When keing grass is not available, little splints of the thet-ngeh-kyoung are made use of. This is the ordinary thatch of the poorer sort of houses, and almost universal in the country districts, but forbidden in the large

towns, on account of its inflammable character. Then, after a time, the nah-kat is brought into use. This is a curious ear-plug, big at both ends, and smaller in the middle, where the two parts screw into one another. The screw is passed through the lobe of the ear, and the other portion is then twisted on. These nah-kat are gradually increased in size, until at last the orifices are large enough to receive the na-doung, the regular ear-cylinders. These are of various make and material, the latter being regulated by the sumptuary laws in independent territory. The royal family, both males and females, have them of gold, richly set with jewels, often a single large brilliant in front, or a diamond surrounded by a ring of emeralds, while the back is a cluster of rubies. The right to wear these is also extended to the higher ministers and their families. Others wear them of gold, plain hollow tubes, or with the ends filled up with delicate *repoussé* work. Those who cannot afford this, content themselves with solid amber plugs, which, when they are without a flaw, are worth three or four pounds sterling a piece. Finally, the poor content themselves with hollow pipes of glass, coloured in a variety of tints. The shape is somewhat peculiar, a slight irregular concave, if I may be allowed the expression, the front being a little larger in diameter than the back. Some of the princesses wear very costly na-doung, the diamonds, and especially the rubies, for which Burma is celebrated, being exceedingly fine. The men, except those of high rank, very seldom wear them, unless on exceptional feast days. Women ordinarily put them on whenever they go out. Poor people keep the holes open with a roll of paper or cloth. A *chic* damsel very often courts attention by carrying spare cheroots dangling from her lobes. Elder women who subordinate personal appearance to bodily comforts usually do the same thing on a journey. It secures them

a smoke whenever they may want it, and the huge green cheroots are not easily carried in the penetralia of the Burmese female dress, while if they were in the travelling box, they might be abstracted by unscrupulous youngsters.

It is curious to notice how much the custom is falling into disuse in British territory with the men. Even among the wealthier classes you seldom see a man wearing a na-doung of the largest size. Those of the thickness of a pencil or a little less are still common, but they too probably will pass out of use shortly. Yet this used to be looked upon as the distinctive mark of Burmese nationality. Probably, nowadays, the tattooing is considered sufficient; while the ear-plugs were certainly inconvenient things, and afforded obvious attractions to robbers. But with the women ear-boring is still universal, and probably will continue so as long as the men go on tattooing, notwithstanding the pain of the process. The na-doung are as characteristic of the Burmese woman as the flapping tamehn.

CHAPTER VII.

MARRIAGE.

In the Lawkaneedee, the book of proverbs relating to ordinary life, it is said that monks and hermits are beautiful when they are lean; four-footed animals when they are fat; men when they are learned; and women when they are married. This recommendation to the married state is no more needed by Burmese maidens than it is by their sisters in other parts of the world, and they have the further inducement that they enjoy a much freer and happier position than in any other Eastern country, and in some respects are better off even than women in England. All the money and possessions which a girl brings with her on marriage are kept carefully separate for the benefit of her children or heirs, and she carries her property away with her if she is divorced, besides anything she may have added to it in the interim by her own trading or by inheritance. Thus a married Burmese woman is much more independent than any European even in the most advanced states. In the eyes of the Dammathat the old idea of the "*patria potestas*" prevails indeed, and woman is regarded as a simple chattel, belonging entirely to her parents, and to be disposed of by them without any reference to her personal inclinations; but, as a matter of fact, she may do pretty well as she pleases, may marry the

youth on whom she has fixed her affections, and may separate herself from the husband who has offended her, by going before the village elders and stating her case; and if the complaint is just, her request is never refused.

As yet they have not begun to demand an equal share of education with the boys, and the only accomplishments most Burmese girls know, are how to dress neatly, do up their hair, and powder their faces. This is the single open implication of their inferiority—except in worship at the pagoda, when every woman will pray that in another existence she may be a man—and it is not likely that female education will make much progress for another generation, the popular idea in Burma being that learning is no use to a girl when she has it, and she may, consequently, as well devote all her spare time to making herself look as pretty as possible. Here and there are a few who are deeply learned in Burmese literature. The young wife of one of the most prominent living Burman pleaders in Rangoon has as good a knowledge of the sacred books and as great a fluency in repeating Pali rituals as any pohngyee in the country. But the great majority of girls only know what they pick up from the conversation of their brothers and the men who come about the house. It is therefore greatly to their credit that they manage not only house affairs, but their husband's business into the bargain. A farmer's wife will carry out the sale of the whole rice crop to the agent of an English rice firm in her husband's absence, and generally strikes a better bargain than he would have made himself. If the village head constable is away, the wife will get together the policemen, stop a fight, arrest the offenders, and send them off to the lockup all on her own responsibility. The wife sits by, no matter what public business is being transacted, and very often puts in her own opinion quite as a matter of

course; in fact, she is virtual master of the house, and henpecked husbands are not by any means uncommon, King Theebaw himself furnishing a notable instance. There never was a king of Burma before who remained for three years the husband of one wife. It is not inclination in his case. He has had quite a number of *amourettes;* but the sturdy Soo-payah Lat and her formidable mother soon get the offending damsels out of the way.

According to the Laws of Menu there are three ways in which a marriage can be brought about:—

1. When the parents of the couple give them to one another.
2. When they come together through the good offices of a go-between, called an oung bwè.
3. When they arrange the matter between themselves.

It is understood, of course, that the two latter forms require at least the passive consent of the father, or, if he is dead, of the guardian, mother, brother, sister, uncle, or whoever it may be; every woman—every young woman at any rate—being necessarily under the protection of somebody. The Dammathat says: "Let the man to whom she is given by her nearest relation be her husband. If the parents or the relations of the girl do not give her away, and she is carried off against their will, even if she has had ten children, they have power to cause her to separate from the man and give her to another; the man has no right to say that she is his wife. Why is this? Because a daughter belongs to her parents?" But, on the other hand, "If a young woman runs off with a young man not approved by her parents, and, having concealed herself for some time, shall return to the village or neighbourhood in which her parents live, and have two or three children, or live there five or ten years

with the man after her parents have seen and known of her being there, they shall not have power to cause her to separate from her husband."

According to the old system, the young man was not considered of age to marry till he was twenty-four or twenty-five. The age of the girl was always a matter of no consequence as long as she had attained to puberty. When a youth wanted to marry he told his parents, and they went to the father and mother of the young woman of his choice. If these had no objections, then the young man kept company with the girl, had the run of the house for two or three years, so that they might get to know one another well, and then, if they were still of one mind, the question of dowry was settled, a fortunate day and hour fixed upon, and the marriage carried out. Nowadays such formalities are almost entirely dispensed with. If the parents of both houses are agreeable, the contracting parties get married with most ardent lover-like rapidity. The age too has become very much younger. Most lads get married when they are eighteen or nineteen; thirteen or fourteen is a common age for the girls. Runaway marriages are common enough, and though the parents may be angry, they are usually too easy-going and indolent to take any energetic action in the matter, and let the couple find out their mistake and come and ask for pardon and a house to live in, which is seldom refused. Occasionally in Lower Burma a stern father demands that they shall be separated until the lad has got a situation for himself, but this is ordinarily little more than a mere form of speech. In Upper Burma, where food is scarce and working hands more valuable, the husband is brought to the girl's parents' house and made to do his share towards supporting the household.

The preliminary courting is naturally conducted in the

old fashion, best known to those who have had experiences of their own in such matters. The parties meet at pwès, the girl perhaps selling cheroots, fried garlic, le'pet, and what not, and therefore being readily accessible to any swain. It must not be supposed that keeping a stall is regarded as anything derogatory. Numbers of perfectly well-to-do women set them up regularly; some even have daily work in the bazaars, and very often a girl commences an undertaking of the kind with the view of attracting the young men and securing a husband. Then there are meetings at pagoda feasts, in the zayats and at friends' houses, so that there are plenty of chances of introduction to eligible *partis*, even without calling in the assistance of the oung bwè. This functionary makes it a regular occupation to know all the eligible young women in the place, and for a small consideration, or sometimes merely for love of his trade, brings young couples together and arranges places of meeting for them. He is of course most useful where an impecunious youth aspires to the hand of a rich merchant's or high official's daughter. He manages an introduction in a roundabout way to avoid rousing suspicions, praises his client's appearance and abilities, contrives a series of unexpected meetings, and does everything, in fact, to further the project. There are regular practitioners in the business, and others who dabble in it for want of something to do and from sheer love of scheming.

Courting, whether authorised by the parents or not, is very seldom carried on in daylight. So much is this the case that the phrase Loo-byo hlè thee a-chehn, "Courting time," is commonly used in ordinary conversation to designate nine o'clock at night, or a little before or after. The time may be due to the fact that occupation, or the heat, prevent it during the day, but there is an old saw

which may account for it, to the effect that in the morning women are cross and peevish; in the middle of the day they are testy and quarrelsome; but at night they are sweet and amiable. Authorised courtship, if the term may be allowed, is always carried on at this time, and preparations for it are duly made by the girls. A couple of hours after nightfall the lover, with a friend or two, makes his appearance near the house and dawdles up and down till he finds the old people have gone to bed, or retired from the scene. Then he goes up the steps along with his supporters and finds the girl alone, or with a companion or two, dressed in her best, with flowers in her hair, powder on her cheeks and neck, and generally prepared for conquest. The old people are never present, though they can hear everything, and the mother, as I am credibly informed, pouk-kyee thee, has a convenient chink in the bamboo walls through which she can survey operations and prevent too ardent love-making. Interviews vary in length, and the nature of the conversation may be best left to the imagination. If one of the accompanying young men has also an appointment that evening he naturally endeavours to curtail his friend's philandering as much as possible, in order that he himself may have the more time in another place to press his suit. Even in clandestine flirtations the courting is always effected in a formal way like this. Meetings in lover's loans, or *à quatre yeux*, would ruin a girl's character immediately.

Little presents are exchanged. The *soupirant* brings a gay kerchief with some love-verses written on it, perhaps his own composition, more probably the erotic sighings of the prince in the last play he heard, or cribbed bodily from a song-book for Kahla-thahs. The girl gives him some green cheroots, rolled by her fair hands, or a brilliant woollen muffler which she has knitted; but there

is never any of the kissing and caressing indulged in by more demonstrative foreign lovers. The girl would look upon any attempts of such a nature as highly indecorous.

When at last everything has been settled—parents' consent obtained, dowry fixed, and a fortunate day and hour pitched upon—the marriage ceremony comes off in the house of the bride's parents. The ritual is very simple and has nothing whatever of a religious character about it; in fact the celibate pohngyees would be grossly scandalised if they were asked to take any part in it. A great feast is prepared at the expense of the bridegroom or his parents. All the relations, friends, and neighbours are invited, and in fact it is the publicity of the thing that is the main feature of the ceremony. The old custom that the bride and bridegroom should join their right hands together, palm to palm, in the presence of all the assembled guests, and then should eat rice out of the same dish and feed each other with one or two morsels in turtle-dove fashion, has in many cases died out, and the eating and drinking, the talk of the men in the main room of the house and of the women in the inner apartment, is quite enough to solemnise the union. When the newly married couple retire into the bridal chamber it is sometimes in the larger towns the custom to shower saffron-coloured rice on them, but this, like the entire seclusion in which the happy pair are supposed to pass the next seven days, is very seldom actually carried out.

In the country villages, however, two ancient customs are still very generally prevalent. The one is to tie a string across the road along which the bridegroom must pass to the house of his intended. He comes in procession with all his friends, carrying the greater portion of the belongings with which he intends to set up house; a

bundle of mats, a long arm-chair, a teak box, mattresses, pillows, besides materials for the feast and presents for the bride. The people who have put up the string—called the gold or silver cord—usually young men intent on a jollification of their own, stop the happy man, and threaten to break the string with a curse on the married couple unless some money is given them. It is simple extortion, and English district officers forbid it. Nevertheless the speculation is usually successful. I suppose no one feels very niggardly on his marriage day.

The other custom is much more singular, more ancient, and infinitely more disagreeable. On the night of the marriage a band of the young bachelors of the place come and shower stones and sticks on the roof of the house where the happy couple are, keeping up sometimes such a sustained battery that the thatch or wooden shingles suffer materially, while the furniture and even the inmates occasionally do not escape injury. In Lower Burma the lads are usually bought off with a sum of money, and where the officials do not interfere to prevent it the custom has degenerated into a system of extortion. Not a few lawsuits have sprung out of such sieges. The money paid in toll to this horseplay goes by the name of kè-boh, and is supposed to be devoted by the receivers to making offerings at the pagoda, but the young men nowadays use it entirely for their own entertainment. In Upper Burma the black mail is never demanded, and consequently Father San Germano was puzzled to conceive any reason for the extraordinary practice. Captain Forbes seeing the payment to procure relief, believed that extortion was the sole origin as well as object of the performance. But the learned in Burmese folk-lore assign it a much higher and more estimable beginning. When, after the world was formed, it was first peopled from the

superior heavens of the Byammahs, of the nine that remained behind, weighed down by the gross earthly food they had eaten, five gradually became men and four women. When these Byammah-gyee koh-youk, these nine great ancestors of the Burmese and of all mankind, had gradually degenerated, through the substitution of Pahdahlahtah for the original flavoured earth, and of Thalay rice for the leguminous creeper, desire arose among them, and four of the men took the four women to wife. The fifth man naturally resented being left compulsorily single, and pelted the happy couples with stones on their marriage night. Sympathy with the feelings of this archetypal bachelor has perpetuated the stone throwing by the loo-byos down to the present day, and if there is no dearth of eligible spinsters in our times, the lonely bachelor may be allowed to express his envy at his friend's bliss without being accused of nothing but gross cupidity.

After marriage the couple almost always live for two or three years in the house of the bride's parents, the son-in-law becoming one of the family and contributing to its support. Setting up a separate establishment, even in Rangoon, where the young husband is a clerk in an English office, is looked upon with disfavour as a piece of pride and ostentation. If the girl is an only daughter she and her husband stay on till the old people die.

Polygamy is recognised and permitted, but practically does not exist now in British territory. A man with more than one wife becomes a subject of public talk, and a native official now living is well known all through the three provinces as the myo-oke with twenty wives. In native territory the right to have several wives is equally little used in practice. Many of the high officials who travel about over large districts have wives in almost all the towns they visit—a custom in great measure induced

by the rule which provides that the mayah-gyee, the chief wife, must be left in Mandalay as a hostage for the fidelity of the official. But the great bulk of the people are, and always have been, monogamous. The late king had fifty-three recognised *wives*, of whom thirty-seven survived him. His children numbered one hundred and ten, of whom upwards of fifty survived him. Besides the wives, like Solomon, he had numerous concubines.

The forbidden degrees are few. Marriages with mother, daughter, sister, and half-sister, aunt, grandmother, and granddaughter, are forbidden, but none else. A son may marry his step-mother; it is expressly mentioned in the Dammathat. The sovereign always marries at least one half-sister to ensure the purity of the royal blood, but, rather illogically, the issue of this union is not by any means necessarily heir to the throne. The son whom the king, or his ministers after his death, name, succeeds, or more commonly still, the son who can best maintain his position by force.

The liberty of divorce is practically unrestricted, except by the elaborate laws respecting the division of property. According to the Laws of Menu a woman may obtain a divorce among other reasons for the following: When her husband is poor and unable to support her; when he is always ailing; when he does not work and leads an idle life; when he is incapacitated by reason of old age; when he becomes a cripple after marriage.

And a man may obtain a divorce if his wife has no male children, if she has no love for her husband, or if she persists in going to a house where he tells her she must not visit, and so on.

The law-giver seems in fact to have laid down that marriage is a civil contract which either party can dissolve; but, unless with good reason, the one that wishes

to separate must suffer in property, more or less severely, accordingly as the plea is good or bad.

Property, for this purpose, is said to be of three kinds. Pah-yin, property acquired by, or in possession of, persons before marriage. Let-htet-pwah, property acquired by husband or wife after marriage. Tin-thee, property inherited or obtained by gift. Pah-yin after marriage becomes hnit-pah-zohn, that is, the joint property of husband and wife, but only when it is agreed between them either before or after marriage that the property shall be put together for the mutual benefit.

In the event of a divorce both parties take away whatever pah-yin they may have had on marriage, and the let-htet-pwah is divided either by mutual agreement, or by the decision of the village elders who sanction the separation.

But divorces are far from being so common as most writers would have us believe. The warmth of family affection is one of the strongest traits of the race, and the Burman is always very kind to his wife, while every girl is taught from her earliest years to look with the highest respect upon man as man, and to defer in all things to his judgment, though she is far more free than the Indian wife. The Burman consults with his partner in all his affairs, public and private, and often is entirely guided by her. She keeps the shop that is to be found in almost every house in the country towns, and usually makes far more money than the goodman himself. It is a simple matter to blame the Burmese for easy marriage customs, but the system speedily puts an end to unhappy and ill-assorted unions, and illegitimate children are exceedingly rare. Finally, unless there is good known cause for a separation the divorced parties are not by any means looked upon with a favourable eye. The man who enters

a monastery to get rid of a wife goes by the contemptuous name of taw-twet "jungle runaway," for the rest of his life, while the ta-koo-lat, the *divorcée*, is a perennial subject of joke to the jester in the play:—

> "She that's neither maid, married, nor widow,
> Fits all men as a pot does its lid, O."

That is to say, a divorced woman needs small wooing. Such a woman will not hestitate to cut off the byah-bazan, the lappets of hair that fall down over the ears, the last resource of the despairing and unwilling celibate.

The literature of marriage is not inconsiderable. The tattooing ceremonies, a-noo say, love-philtres, charms, and what not, are referred to elsewhere. There remain a number of singular matters to be taken note of by those who would be happy in married life. Thus the girls are told how they may ascertain a man's character by the colour of his heart's blood—though how they are to ascertain this colour without injury to the subject of inquiry is not mentioned. A lustful man's blood is dark red; a cross, quarrelsome man's is so dark as almost to be black; a lazy man's like elephant's water; a rough-speaking man's like boiled pease: a charitable man's like the flower of the mahah hlayga, a species of bauhinia; while a learned man's heart's blood is beautiful as the ruby.

Similarly useless knowledge is the statement that an ignorant man's heart is all in one mass, while that of the well-instructed divides itself into three small parts.

As models of married women are held up the Taw lay-wa, the most faithful and beautiful of wives, the consorts of four of the chief princes in the ten great Jatakas, treating of the last births of the Lord Buddha. To say that a girl is Taw lay-wa win louk, calculated to become like one of these four great queens, Amayah

the wife of Mahawthata, the Solomon of Buddhist kings; Madee, the wife of Waythandaya, world-famed for his charity; Kehnnayee or Thanboola, the partners of princes hardly less celebrated, is to pay the highest possible compliment to any woman. But these are somewhat vague and intangible matters. There are other recommendations which appeal much more directly to those intending to get married; to the man that seeks a wife, san-shway, pure as "test gold"; or the girl who would avoid a lin-kway, a "cur of a husband."

Prominent among these is the rhyme of "the hostile pairs," the yan-hpet, who, if they marry, will certainly have a short life.

Some violence is done to the niceties of language in the linga, so that I may be allowed the same in the translation of a portion of it.

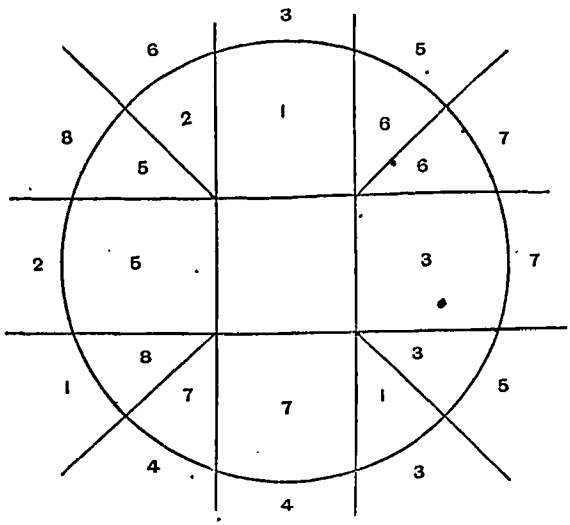
Friday's daughter
Didn't oughter
Marry with a Monday's son;
Should she do it
Both will rue it,
Life's last lap will soon be run.

The same lamentable result would follow if the man were born on Friday and the woman on Monday. Again:

Saturdays and Thursdays,
The serpent and the rat,
You cannot find out worse days,
Life's short enough at that.

The serpent and the rat preside over Saturday and Thursday respectively. Similar curtailment of life would follow if the union was between Sunday and Wednesday, or between Tuesday and the eighth half-day Yahu. One or both contracting parties would soon die if children of these hostile days married.

On the other hand there is an elaborate figure showing what unions according to birthdays will be lucky.



The numbers represent the days of the week according to the order. 1, Sunday; 2, Monday; 3, Tuesday; 4, Wednesday, 5, Thursday; 6, Friday; 7, Saturday; 8, Yahu (half Wednesday). The inner numbers represent the man's birthday; the outer the woman's. Those who choose their wives in accordance with this figure will be happy and well-to-do.

The outer ring the maiden's,
The inner ring the man's.
All ye who would be wealthy
On this scheme form your plans.

All these rhymes are learned by the little boys at school, sometimes formally taught them by the preceptor as an excerpt from the Baydin, sometimes, when the yahan refuses to recognise the validity of these books, studied

surreptitiously along with the secular plays and song-books. Whatever else a girl may know, you may be sure she can give you the marriage rhymes.

After the marriage has been settled upon, lucky combination of birthdays, parents' consent, settlement of dower and so on, all satisfactorily arranged, the difficulties are not yet over. A lucky day has to be sought from the horoscopes of the two chief parties, but beyond this there are a number of obstacles which must on no account be overlooked. In the first place, with the pious the same rule prevails as in England, that no marriages should take place in Lent. This cuts upwards of three months out of the year immediately. Unfortunately a number of persons are so completely in the world of kahma, the seat of the passions, that they care very little whether it is the season of the Wah or not. But almost every one, whether pious or not, considers well the character of the months as given in the marriage linga. The year begins with Tagoo, commencing about the middle of April. In this month and Kasohn the next, couples marrying will be very rich. In Nayohn they will love one another. Those marrying in Wahsoh and Wahgoung, when Lent begins, will die or be grievously sick. If the young pair are so mad as to brave the danger, their parents should stop the marriage. In Tawthalin, Na'daw, and Pyatho, if you marry, you will lose goods and money. In Thadingyoot you will have slaves, children, and money as much as you want. In Tasoungmohn slaves, buffaloes, cattle and furniture in abundance, will flow in upon the married couple. Tabohdwè and Taboung are very unlucky for those who tempt Hymen. There will be no children, or only girls, and misfortunes will be frequent. Nevertheless though there is all this trouble in getting a wife to your mind, as well as lucky in time of birth, worldly goods, and

season of marriage, there are very few Burmans, not in the sacred order, who are not married before they are twenty, and happily married too. As the popular saying puts it—

"Yay hnin ngah
Lin hnin mayah."

Fish to the water,
Man to Eve's daughter.

CHAPTER VIII.

DOMESTIC LIFE.

THE Burman is the most calm and contented of mortals. He does not want to grow rich. When he does make a large sum of money, he spends it all on some pious work, and rejoices in the thought that this will meet with its reward in his next existence. If he never amasses enough to build any great public work, at any rate he subscribes what he can, and is generous in almsgiving. A bountiful soil will not let its children starve; and so the Burman jogs on through a cheerful existence, troubled by no anxious cares, and free from all the temptations of ambition. His daily round is simple enough. In the morning, after his bath, he loiters about, talking to the neighbours till breakfast time, or perhaps strolls out to the corner of his paddy field, and indulges in a contemplative smoke. After breakfast he probably dozes through the heat of the day, and when the shadows begin to get long, saunters about again. A semblance of regular labour appears when the paddy is being sown or the grain reaped, but even then no one is in the least inclined to disturb himself for the sake of rapid work. It is sufficient that you are always certain in Burma what kind of weather you are going to have. "Another hot day," or "another wet day," is quite as much a matter of course as the rising of the sun itself,

and there is therefore no need to hurry operations in case of a change. The evenings are spent ordinarily at a pwè during the fine season, or in amicable converse over a cheroot at a friend's house in the rains. Variety comes occasionally in the shape of a jolting, hilarious journey to a distant pagoda feast, or a trip down the river in the big rice-boat to one of the great milling towns. And so an uneventful life passes away: the greatest ambition to see the village boat successful at the Thadingyoot races, and the village champion cock or buffalo triumphant over all others; the greatest desire to live peaceably with all men and observe the Ten Precepts; the greatest excitement the occasional visit of the English district officer, or the suspicion of a witch in that lonely house down by the nat's pool on the creek. In Upper Burma this quiet is more apt to be disturbed, by the summoning of levies to serve in some special raid against audacious dacoits, or to make a demonstration against reiving mountaineers. If the myo-woon is a pious man, calls for enforced labour at digging tanks, building pagodas and monasteries, rest-houses and tazoungs, are likely to keep the villager a great deal more occupied than he cares for. There can be no doubt in any patriotic Burman's mind that the state of the people, heavily taxed though they be, in British Burma, is infinitely happier than over the border, and all but the ignorant and fanatic lower classes long for the day when the English flag shall float over all the land as far as Mohgoung. There is no hope for the country, where even under a kindly king like the last, ill-conditioned governors can oppress the populace with absolute impunity. Complaints may be made, but his majesty cannot venture to leave his palace for any great distance to inquire for himself, and gold easily dulls the senses of the highest minister round the golden throne. It is little wonder

then that the people, kept perpetually in the lowest depths of poverty, are, if not actually dying out, certainly not increasing in numbers. There is nothing which so much indicates the popular feeling, and at the same time so irritates the Burmese Government, as the unceasing stream of emigrants to Lower Burma.

Nevertheless, even in Independent territory the Burman preserves his light heart and buoyant disposition. No calamity is so overwhelming as to make him despond. Some years ago a large fire occurred in Mandalay, and spread with such terrible rapidity that the inhabitants of a whole quarter were unable to save anything but the clothes they wore. Some of them went the next day to the English chaplain in Mandalay, and told him of the misfortune that had befallen them, and how so completely were they rendered destitute that they had been indebted to the charity of the inhabitants of the monastery for a breakfast that morning. The clergyman promised to do what he could for them, and the same evening went along to view the site of the fire. What was his astonishment to find that the burnt-out victims had rigged up a rude stage among the charred stumps of their house posts, and in default of a house to sleep in, were prepared to spend the night listening to the love-making of the princes and princesses, and laughing at the caustic witticisms of the clown, not a few of the jokes being inspired by the blackened surroundings. Such defiance of all the ills of fate is very characteristic, and would seem to a Burman mind the most natural thing to do under the circumstances, as affording both distraction and amusement.

If any one has escaped the curse of Adam it is the Burman. He does not need to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow, and riches having no attraction for him, when his patch of paddy land has been reaped, his only

concern is how to pass the time, and that is no very difficult matter, where he has plenty of cheroots and betel-nut. He can stroll along to neighbour Moung Gyee's, whose son has a knack for wood-carving, and watch him as he deftly cuts out a piece of elaborate scroll-work for the roof of a neighbouring monastery, or finishes off the grim features of a beeloo for the English Inspector of Police. Next door the sayah is engaged on a painting, the representation of some palace scene, or of some well-known event in the life of the Lord Buddha. Burmese artists do not go in much for taking likenesses, though they are by no means unsuccessful when they make the attempt. As a rule, however, any one but a high official would consider it a mark of great presumption and conceit to hang up a picture of himself in his house. There is, however, none of the objection to portrait painting which is so common with some other nations. For example, the Mohammedans will not suffer likenesses to be drawn for fear they should demand a soul on the Day of Judgment, and so some actual human being might come to be left out in the cold. Catlin tells us that the American Indian chief was in a state of great alarm lest his soul might be carried off with his picture. A notion of the same kind appears in the Chinese custom of getting a priest to put in the pupil of the eye, a method which often has rather a ghastly effect when the reverend gentleman is not skilful. Similarly, every Chinese-owned craft, from the sampan to the English-built iron screw steamer, has a couple of eyes painted on its bows, in order that it may see the way. Down in the Straits, and in all places where there are many Chinese, the local steamers, whoever their owners may be, are all endowed with eyes. Were they not so favoured, no Chinaman would travel with them as a passenger, or send any of his goods aboard of them. The

Burman is not troubled with any such fantastic notions, and has no objection whatever to sitting for his portrait, only, as the late king said to Colonel Yule, they prefer a flattering likeness to an exact one. It is seldom, however, that a Burman has a picture gallery in his house, and the village artist usually confines himself to vivid-coloured sketches for the funeral of a pohngyee, or to be hung round the mandut, where the great people sit to look on at a play. The drawing and the perspective are naturally a little faulty, but the details are usually worked out with very creditable skill.

Thus wandering about, seeing what his neighbours are doing, with an occasional visit to the monastery to have some edifying talk with the religious, our villager may spend the time very comfortably. Oftenest, however, he stays at home, and waits for visitors to drop in and have a little gossip. The goodwife always has a little shop in the lower part of the building. There is hardly a single house in the whole village where something is not offered for sale: a few dried fish, betel-nut, with the fresh green leaves, lime, cardamons, and cutch, all ready for making up, half a dozen cocoanuts, or perhaps some twopenny-ha'penny knives, looking-glasses, coloured tumblers, and paltry Manchester goods, or where there are many girls about the house, a few home-made lohn-gyees and pasohs, woven at odd times in the loom which stands in the yard or in a corner of the verandah of every house. The stock in trade is intended more as an excuse for people to enter the house and have a talk than with any idea of making a profit. Whatever money is drawn is regarded as a kind of pin-money for the mistress of the establishment. When the ladies of the household are in earnest about trading, they start a stall in the bazaar, and very good hands they are at driving a bargain. A more regretable trait is the

forcible character of their language when they are annoyed. But this, I believe, is a characteristic of the fair sex all the world over, whether in trade or out of it. Certain it is that the *dames de la halle* and the Billingsgate fishwives would require all their powers of voice and vituperation to silence a bazaar maiden when she sets her mind to it.

There are as a general thing two meals only in the day: breakfast at about eight in the morning, and dinner at five in the afternoon. There is no difference in the *menu* of the two meals. The staple article of food is plain boiled rice, which is piled up in a heap on a huge platter, round about which the household arrange themselves, sitting, like pit-men, on their heels. The curry which is taken with it is placed in little bowls, and each one of the party has his own plate, and helps himself. Knives are unnecessary; spoons and forks and celestial chopsticks are unknown, except in the houses of a few Government officials in Rangoon, who have had some experience of English society. Very few are able to afford curries of meat or fish, besides that there are always unscrupulous people ready to disregard the law against taking life, and the material is therefore not always available. Ordinarily the curry consists of a soup, or thin concoction of vegetables, in which chillies and onions figure largely. The other ingredients are very various. Young shoots of bamboo are very delicate in their flavour, if not overpowered by too much garlic. Wild asparagus, the succulent stems of a number of aquatic plants and fleshy arums are constantly used, and may be seen exposed for sale in every bazaar. Tamarind leaves and those of the mango-tree are used by the very poor. The former have a somewhat acrid taste, the latter are curiously aromatic. Along with the curry, which has always a large modicum of oil and salt in it, there are a

variety of condiments, notably the strongly-flavoured nga-pee, without which no Burman would consider his meal complete. Sometimes the big, fierce-stinging kah-gyin, a species of red ant, is used along with this fish paste, sometimes it is fried in oil by itself. As may be imagined, they have an acid and decidedly pungent flavour about them. Roasted turtle's and iguana's eggs, dried fish, and fried ginger are gourmand's adjuncts.[1] Nothing is ever drunk at meals, but each one, when he has finished, goes to the earthenware jar full of water which stands in a corner of the verandah, and rinses out his mouth. It is a lamentable fact that many Burmans in the low country now drink beer and spirits, but this is never done at meals nor in the house, where indeed the wife would not allow it. The tippling Burman goes to the "toddy-shop" for his liquor, and the worst of it is that he does not know when to stop. Brandy of the fiery description known to the British soldier as "fixed bayonets," or "chain-shot," is often drunk, but the usual tipple is "Old Tom." A particularly heady mixture of this with cheap beer is affected by confirmed topers.

After meals every one smokes—men, women, and children. Facetious people have declared that Burman babies blow a cloud while they are still at the breast. This is a scandal. They never indulge till they are able to walk without needing the assistance of their hands. The ordinary Burman cheroot is very mild and has really very little tobacco in it. The full-flavoured article to be seen occasionally in London shops is manufactured almost entirely

[1] There is a particular objection to the smell of cookery, and when anything is fried in oil, or prepared so as to produce a strong savour, it is always done to leeward of the house, and where the fumes may not reach any other dwelling. Such smells are believed to be very productive of ever

for English residents. The say paw-lehp, the cigar for home consumption, commonly known as the green cheroot, is very large, from six to eight inches long and about an inch in diameter at one end, tapering to half that breadth at the other. It rounds a girl's mouth a good deal when she puts it in. In the manufacture of it chopped tobacco leaves and pieces of the stem of the tobacco plant and the pith of the oh'nè, a species of Euphorbia, are the chief ingredients. Very often these are boiled with palm-sugar and allowed to dry before making up. The cover is made of the leaf of the teak-tree, or of a plant called the thanat, the ends being tucked in at the point. A piece of red raw silk fastens it at the end put in the mouth, and some broader pieces of pith are put there to give it stiffness to the lips. The finer kinds, such as are only used in Upper Burma in the palace, are rolled up in the thin white inner coating of the bark of the betel-tree. The cheroot has an ash like a cinder, and usually burns holes in the clothes of an Englishman the first time he tries it. Laid down thoughtlessly on an oily mat it is a fruitful cause of fires. All Burman ladies are adepts at rolling cheroots, and a dozen or two of them form a common present to favoured swains.

Chewing betel is sometimes carried on simultaneously with smoking, but most people prefer to economise enjoyment, and only chew in the interval between smokes. Chewing is hardly an exact expression, and the use of it frequently leads the experimenting Briton into the unpleasant predicament of having all the interstices between his teeth choked up with little fragments of the nut which with their indescribable aromatic flavour stimulate the flow of saliva for hours afterwards. The Burman splits his nut in half, smears a little slaked lime, usually white, but sometimes tinted pink or salmon coloured, on the betel

vine leaf, puts in a little morsel of cutch and tobacco, and then rolls it up and stows away the quid in the side of his mouth, occasionally *squeezing* it a little between his teeth. It is as well to be very cautious with the lime and cutch (the juice of the *Acacia catechu*) the first time you make a trial. The latter especially is very astringent.[1] Chewing kohng-thee is an unlovely practice. The Burman has none of the delicacy with regard to a spittoon which characterises the American, and these articles require to be of a very considerable size. The monks are perhaps the most persistent chewers of the good betel. Smoking is prohibited, but nothing is said against betel, and it is considered a great stimulator of the meditative faculties. The lime used very speedily corrodes and destroys the teeth, and then the old pohngyee has to make the scholars crush up the nuts so that they may not hurt his toothless gums. It is a common belief that no one can speak Burmese well till he chews betel. Demosthenes is said to have put pebbles in his mouth when he was practising oratory.

Alternate smoking, chewing, and conversation serve to pass the day, and after dinner, when the sun goes down, our villager has a bath down by the well to freshen him up. The water is drawn up in a bucket and simply poured over the body. Soap is never used, and particular care is taken not to wet the hair. The head washing is a special ceremony, to be gone through only occasionally, and then with circumspection. Dandies, as a rule, put a mixture of rice-water and water on their hair every day to make it grow long, and cocoanut water is also very generally used. Both sexes are proud of the length of their hair, and it is not uncommon to see it reaching below the knee and down

[1] One variety of the nut, called the toung-ngoo betel, has effects very very much resembling intoxication.

to the ankles. The men wear it in a young or knot on the top of the head, while the sadohn of the women is on the back. Both men and women are in the habit of adding to its size by interweaving false tresses, which are easily got, seeing that everybody has black hair, and that some young member of the family is constantly getting his locks cut off on his entry into the monastery. There is no more sense of shame in using false hair than there is in improving the appearance by wearing fine clothes. At his bath it is usual for a pious person to repeat a Pali charm over the first bucket of water, which is then slowly poured over the body. The object of this is to guard against sickness.

After bathing, our friend usually puts on his fine clothes, for if it is not the rainy season there is sure to be a dramatic performance, or a yehn dance by the village lads and lasses, or an entertainment of some kind going on at some house in the village. The dress is very simple and picturesque. The pasoh is a long silk cloth, fifteen cubits long and about two and a half wide. It is wound round the body, kilt fashion, tucked in with a twist in front, and the portion which remains gathered up and allowed to hang in folds from the waist, or thrown jauntily over the shoulder. The body is covered with a short white cotton jacket, over which a dark or coloured cloth one is often worn. Elderly people, and the wealthy of all ages, when they are paying a visit of ceremony or going to worship at the pagoda, wear a teing-mathehn, a long white coat, open in front except at the throat, where it is tied, and reaching almost to the knees. Round the head a flowered silk handkerchief is loosely wound as a turban. The old wear a simple narrow fillet of white book-muslin round the temples and showing the hair. This is called a pawlohn.

The woman's tamehn is a simple piece of cotton or silk, almost square, four feet and a half long by about five

broad, and woven in two pieces of different patterns. This is wound tightly over the bosom, and fastened with a simple twist of the ends. The opening being in front, the symmetry of the thigh is displayed in walking, but a peculiar outward jerk of the heels which the girls acquire prevents any suggestion of immodesty. The loose cotton jacket is unhappily not so well contrived to display their charms. Over the shoulders is thrown a bright silk handkerchief, the same as that used by the men for turbans. Nothing is worn on the head except flowers twisted into the hair. Dressed in their best, the family sally forth in search of amusement. If it is a pwè, they will not get home till very late, possibly not till daybreak, when the yellow line of monks issuing forth on their matutinal tour may meet them at the monastery gate. A country dance naturally does not last nearly so long, though it is kept up much longer than most people would care to dance a hornpipe, or even a minuet. But a still more favourite form of amusement is the entertainment of a sah-haw sayah, a kind of reciter or improvisatore. He is paid to come to a house, and the company invited are asked to choose a subject for him, some of the favourite zahts, or an incident in history, sacred or secular. Many of them, like the cyclic poets, repeat from memory, but there are others who invent their smooth verses as they go on chanting. They may perform in a house, or in a mandut specially run up for the occasion, or even in the open street. When a well-known sah-haw sayah is going to recite the Waythandaya or the Zanekka Zahts, or when he tells how the Lord Buddha left his father's palace to wear the yellow robe, or how he ascended to Tawadehntha, a dramatic performance is often completely deserted, and the actors have no option but to follow the populace and listen to the improvisatore themselves. One of the best of the Burmese dramatic writers,

Oo Poh Myah, was also particularly celebrated as a sah-haw sayah. He could repeat his own drama, the Weezáya Zaht, from end to end, but had also a particular facility in improvising.

His night's amusement over, the Burman goes home to sound sleep on his Donoobyoo mat, and rises to spend another day of the same kind. He cares nothing for the assertion that he leads an aimless, lazy life. He has enough to live upon, and the writings of all the philosophers say that wealth only brings new cares.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOUSE AND ITS BELONGINGS.

It is singular that in a country where the pagodas and temples will compare in stately grandeur and symmetry of form with the sacred buildings of any part of the world, and where the monastic buildings, though only constructed of wood, strike the most casual observer with their shapely beauty and wealth of decoration; it is singular where there is a taste for such edifices and abundance of the architectural skill necessary to erect them, that the Burman should in the vast majority of cases live in the flimsiest of bamboo huts. The original cause may be found perhaps in the stringent regulations of the Yahzageing. In Upper Burma the shape of a man's house is fixed for him by law according to his station in life. All are one-storied, save where exceptional royal favour has granted the spire-like roof to a distinguished noble. Brick houses are forbidden, from the apprehension that the inhabitants might take it into their heads to turn them into fortifications. Gilding is forbidden to all subjects, and permission to lacquer and paint the pillars of their houses granted to but a very few, and it is expressly laid down that no one shall have an arch over his door. This may account for the paltry and even wretched appearance of the houses in Theebaw Min's territory, but it is undeniable that though

in British Burma they are very considerably more substantial, yet a rich man never by any chance thinks of building himself a grand house, and remains firmly by the unpretentious model of his ancestors. This is the more curious, because they will spare no expense to buy gay turbans and bright-coloured pasohs for themselves, and costly silks for their wives. The ordinary explanation is that every one can see what clothes you wear, while few people care to come and spy out what kind of a house you live in, and how you fare. But there can be very little doubt that the real reason is a survival of the idea of the old Yahzageing, as well as the fact that long years of custom have impressed upon everybody the opinion that there are only two forms of architecture, the secular and the ecclesiastical, and no one, no matter how sure he might be that the Government would take no notice of his ambition, would brave the denunciations of the religious by adding a spire to his house, or even adorning the gable ends with the carved pinnacles and flamboyant finials of the monasteries. Consequently the one regular form prevails everywhere.

The Burman's dwelling, then, is always shaped more or less like a marquee tent, and never more than one story high, to avoid the humiliating possibility of the feet of some one being over your head. But the whole house stands on posts, so that the floor is seven or eight feet from the ground. It consists often of only one room, usually, however, of two or more, and to the front of the house there is always a verandah, three or four feet lower than the general level of the house, and as often as not quite open to the street, or the garden, or whatever may be in front. The posts which form the main or central part of the house are usually six in number, and all have their names, such as Oo-yoo, Kyah-hngan, Nyoung-yan.

The south post, in the main part of the house, the Thabyay-teing, is the best known, as being always adorned with leaves and particularly marked as that in the top of which most probably lives the nat-spirit of the house. A dead body, after being swathed, and while waiting for the coffin, is always placed by it.

A house ought never to be built till the foundations have been thoroughly dug up and shown to a soothsayer. He will determine from the substances found whether it is a lucky place to build a house in or not. It stands to reason that the building cannot be commenced till a lucky day and hour have been sought out. There is considerable care to be observed in the selection of the timber. Posts are masculine, feminine, and neuter. Male posts are of equal size at both ends; females are larger at the bottom; those which swell out in the middle are a-thet ma-shee—without life; teing beeloo, ogre's posts, are largest at the top. As a general rule it may be taken for granted that if a house is built with neuter posts, its inmates will always be miserable and unlucky; if the posts are ogres, death and disaster will attend; male posts are easy-going and harmless; females, on the contrary, are fortunate and leading to honour. But it may happen that the character of the piece of ground on which the house is built upsets all these generalisations, so that it is necessary to get a wise man's opinion before you get your posts. The Dehttohn gives many instructions on the subject, and among other things mentions how a man's fortune may be calculated from the Hlay-ga-tit, the side-pieces of the steps which lead up to the verandah. The presence or absence of knots, and if the former, their position, determines the luck of the householder.

Poor people use bamboo instead of wood, and make their walls of mats, woven of the same substance, split up.

Occasionally, however, they rise to the dignity of common jungle timber. Richer people make use of the invaluable teak, or of pyinka-doh (*Xylia dolabriformis*), a wood almost as durable, and equally expensive. White ants will attack neither of these. The walls of such houses are planked. The roof is sometimes composed of small flat tiles, but more commonly of thatch. This consists in most places of danee, the leaves of the toddy-palm, which are first soaked in salt water, a precaution which prevents insects from destroying them. This style of roofing is very satisfactory in every respect but one. It is cheap, easily put on, thoroughly water-tight, but very inflammable, and consequently is not allowed in any of the larger towns of British Burma. In the smaller stations, however, it is almost universal, and the consequence is that when one house takes fire, the sparks from it kindle all the others, as a matter of course. Consequently, as an imperative measure of protection, every house is provided with a long hooked bamboo, called a mee-cheht, by means of which to pull off all the thatch as soon as a fire breaks out in the neighbourhood, and in addition to this a mee-kat stands beside it. This is a broad griddle, or flapper kind of thing, and its object is to beat out the flame which may be caused by a spark lighting on the roof. In addition to this, in many parts of the country, pots full of water are always kept in readiness on the tops of the houses, so that when the hour of danger comes, the householder may douse his roof, and so do the best for himself. In Mandalay some of the pah-gwets, and other outcasts, patrol the streets all night, to watch for and prevent fires as much as possible.

Another kind of roofing is wah-kat, a sort of flat tile-like construction, six feet long by two feet broad, made of coarse bamboo matting. Bamboos split in half down the

centre, and with the knots smoothed away, are also used. They are placed close together, with the hollow side upwards, extending all the way down from the ridge to the eaves, and over these again are placed others with the rounded side up, the whole presenting rather a curious appearance, but making a very serviceable roof and not nearly so dangerous as the danee. The leaves of other trees are also occasionally used, but the simplicity and cheapness of the danee roof makes it by far the most prevalent, notwithstanding its danger. In Rangoon and Maulmein, shingles, that is, small wooden slabs like slates, are being very generally introduced.

In the better class of houses the floors are made of planking, but poorer people have nothing better than a series of whole bamboos laid side by side on the cross-beams and tied down with rattans. This is not very pleasant to walk on, and has the further disadvantage of being anything but cleanly, for the spaces between the bamboos offer an irresistible temptation to drop all litter and garbage on to the ground immediately underneath the house, and were it not for the pariah dogs the sanitary condition of the place would soon be very bad.

The house is thus simple enough in its character, but the furniture is still more so. Intercourse with the English has indeed brought many Burmans to indulge in English luxuries, and in many houses in Rangoon, chandeliers, book-cases, pictures, and even statuary are to be seen, besides abundance of chairs and tables, and occasionally bedsteads, while clocks, kerosine lamps, looking-glasses, and lounge chairs are universal. But it is very different in the district houses. There is practically no furniture at all there, for a chair is no use to a Burman, and without chairs tables are equally useless. Consequently all that is to be seen in a jungle house is the goodman's box, and

a few woven mats and hard bamboo pillows to sleep on. Cots are not used, for one of the Ten Precepts to be kept on duty-days is that one must not sleep on a high place. The only furnishings visible are the mats rolled up during the day with the rugs or blankets which serve for bedding. The mats themselves are probably home-made, manufactured from fine strips of bamboo, the best being those with the polished silicious outside, which stand any amount of work. Softer, finer articles are made from the skin of the theng, a species of rush, which takes a black dye, and is often worked into patterns, but no one has anything more elaborate, and indeed nothing better could be wished for. A cooler bed could not easily be found. In the country, also, the cooking place during the rains is in the house. During the fine weather culinary operations are carried on in the open air, behind the premises. The cooking range is nothing more than a box, two or three feet square, and six inches deep, filled up with earth or ashes, and on the top of this the wood used as fuel is piled. The cooking utensils and the dining service are equally simple. The former consists of nothing further than two or three earthen pots with lids to them, and a wooden spurtle to stir the contents with. Close at hand is a jar full of water, with a ladle—half a cocoanut with a handle through it. These are all the kitchen appliances. In place of table there is a huge round dish of lacquered wood, called a byat. These byats are sometimes as much as three feet and more in diameter, and on them is heaped up in a gigantic pile the rice, while the curry is served in little bowls disposed round about. A young couple have, therefore, no ruinous expenses when they set up house. The inventory of effects necessarily is soon made.

Outside the house there is not much more to notice. The abundance of land allows every one to have a court-

yard of his own. In this the farmer keeps his cart and plough, the fisherman his boat. The buffaloes and oxen of the whole village are usually all together on a pasture-ground kept by some speculative individual, who charges a couple of rupees or so for feeding and looking after them. The care exercised is not very great. Heat and rain kill many of them, where, as is too frequently the case, no shelter is available; foot-and-mouth disease, and other epidemics, carry off great numbers, and finally, they are not at all averse to killing one another. Consequently the vultures are always to be seen on the trees round the village pasture-land. Besides his implements the house-owner has always in his yard a hand rice-mill. Husking paddy has become, near the big towns, quite a regular trade, and abundance of cleaned rice may be bought in the bazaars, but in the village every family husks its own rice, the grain being kept stored in a small granary in the yard. The milling is done by the women, and there are two processes in the operation. The mill consists of two wooden cylinders about two feet thick, the inner surfaces of both roughened in a simple way by the cutting of radii from their centres, the lines being about a quarter of an inch deep. The upper cylinder has a funnel-shaped hole cut through it, to let the grain down, and is worked backwards and forwards by a long pole loosely fastened in, the rice coming out between the two cylinders, and falling on mats down below. It is winnowed either in the primitive way of throwing it into the air, so that the light husk may be blown away, or, often nowadays in Lower Burma, by a hand-worked pair of fanners, introduced since the English occupation.

The rice is not yet, however, ready for cooking. The inner pellicle has still to be removed, and this is done in a big wooden mortar. Two varieties are in use, worked either by

hand, as an apothecary pounds his drugs, the pestle being very long and heavy; or by foot, when the wooden mortar is sunk in the ground. The pestle in this latter case consists of a short, stumpy piece of wood, let into a long lever near the end. This lever is supported on two uprights at some distance from the mortar, and the machine is worked by a person stepping on and off the bar, so as to raise the pestle and let it fall on the rice in the mortar. The rice is very thoroughly cleaned in this way, and Burmans prefer it to that which has passed between the mill-stones of the European factory. The Derbyshire, or composition stones, do their work only too thoroughly, and remove so much of the pellicle as to take away all the flavour, besides that the great heat caused by the steady grinding tends to the same result. Consequently the pleasant refrain of the girls chanting at their work may be heard all over the village after dark, and when a large quantity has to be prepared for some offering to the Sacred Order on a feast-day, the chanted chorus rises and falls round about the homestead often till long past "midnight cock-crow," till the rising of the "red star" warns them to retire to rest, tired, but happy, for such a good work earns great merit. A sesamum oil-press is also frequently found in at least one house in every village. This is equally simple in its construction. It consists of a deep wooden trough, in which the seeds are pressed by a heavy upright timber fixed in a frame. The weight is increased by a long lever, on the end of which a man sits and guides a bullock which goes round in a circle, thus crushing and turning the seed at the same time.

The carts are very strongly built, and are remarkable for the way in which the floor curves upwards towards the back in the same way as the boats do. In Burma proper the wheels are mostly composed of one solid,

roughly-rounded slab of wood, or in some cases of two semi-circular slabs joined together, and these are still found in out-of-the-way places in British Burma, though wheels constructed in European fashion with spokes are mostly in use. Occasionally to save trouble the carter starts with a square wheel, and trusts to time to round it for him. Padouk (*Pterocarpus indicus*) is the wood most valued for this purpose, but it is too expensive for most people. The wheels are never greased, and make hideous shrieking noises as they revolve. This serves to keep away tigers and cheetahs when a journey is being made. At night the carts are arranged in a laager with the high backs outwards, and all inside, including the six oxen to every waggon, are safe from wild animals. The waggoners get to glory in the horrid sound of their wheels, which often can be heard miles off in the forest. A wheel with a creak of particular volume and power of penetration is highly prized, and an experienced driver can tell whom he is going to meet or overtake by the groanings of the axles and the key in which they are pitched. Every bullock in addition carries a square metal bell tied under his throat.

In the yard round about the house there is very often a little garden fenced off in a rough kind of way, but no particular care is taken to keep it neat and free from weeds—no easy matter even for an active gardener in Burma. The favourite plant is always the Bohdda Tharanat (*Canna Indica*, or Indian shot), so named from its seeds, which are used for the beads of the rosary. The flowers are red, or sometimes white. The fable relates that it sprang from the Buddha's blood. His impious and evil-minded brother-in-law and cousin Dewadat, enraged that he was not allowed to have a separate assembly of his own, went to the top of a hill and rolled down a huge

stone, intending to destroy the most excellent payah. But the boulder burst into a thousand pieces, and only one little bit bruised Shin Gautama's toe, and drew a few drops of blood, whence sprang the sacred flower. The renowned physician Zaywaka healed the great teacher's wound in a single day, and almost immediately afterwards the earth opened and swallowed up the sacrilegious Dewadat. The plants and flowers usually stand demurely in a single row, or perhaps in three or four, like a patch of peas The *Datura tatula* is almost always found, and among the other mingled vegetables and medicinal plants the *Celosia cristata*, in both its yellow and purple varieties, is a special favourite. But the Burman can scarcely vaunt his success as a flower gardener.

There are always a few domestic animals and pets about the premises. Every family has its dog, which trots about the establishment and makes a terrible to do whenever a white man appears. The pariahs are magnificent watch-dogs with their uninflectional, agglutinative barking. They sleep most of the day, and at night gather together in bands and do their best to make up for the want of jackals in Burma. There is always a huge band of unattached dogs about the village, for Buddhism does not permit of the drowning of superfluous puppies, and these manage to lead a fairly well-fed life between stealing and devouring the offerings at the pagoda, and the superabundant charity received by the monks in their morning begging rounds. It is a mystery how they manage to exist in Mandalay and Upper Burma generally; there are such constantly increasing hordes of them. In British territory the Assistant Commissioner periodically issues an edict, and poisoned meat and the policemen's truncheons thin out their numbers very thoroughly for a month or two. The house-dog often perishes with his

Bohemian acquaintances, and there is much lamentation among the younger members of the household, but there is no difficulty in getting a successor, grown up or otherwise. The ordinary pariah has a greater turn for agility than pluck, and the young civilian's English bull-dog would probably kill more of them, when he is on a tour to the outlying villages with his master, than he actually does, if he was as smart on his legs as he is with his jaws. The pariah is almost as noisy and quarrelsome as a Madrasi, but any fights there are result as harmlessly as a French duel. Nevertheless some of the trained hunting dogs will fasten on to a tiger, or a cheetah, or the even more dangerous wild boar, with the greatest determination. So esteemed are they that the sporting owner usually receives an official message to keep his dogs in safety when the half-yearly poisoners are about. Still though buffalo fights and mains of cocks have been common in Burma time out of mind, the pariah has never been called upon to develop pugnacious instincts.

The harmless, necessary cat is not so abundant. There are, however, few villages without one or two of them. What becomes of the kittens is a mystery. Perhaps they go wild and take to the woods. Perhaps the pariah eats them when their mother is out foraging. At any rate the fact remains that they increase but very slowly. The Burman cat is more fortunate than his Malay congener in possessing a tail, but asserts relationship with that animal in the possession of a horny hook, with this difference, that the hard excrescence is at the end of a tail of fair dimensions instead of being humbly situated on the rump, as is the case with the Straits tabby.

There are always some tame villatic fowl about the house. If the householder does not aspire to the ownership of a teik-kyet, a regular game cock, bred for the purpose, he has

at least a kyet-hpa, an ordinary cock of combative instincts, and backs him against his neighbour's when occasion offers, through the absence of the constable, by chance, or by the influence of pecuniary profit acting on a sporting disposition. A cock that declines to fight under any circumstances is called a kyet nyoung-gan, and stands in great danger of dying suddenly and being converted into curry. Hens are regarded with indifference except in view of similar possibilities, for their eggs are of no use. A fowl may be killed by accident by a stick thrown at random, but the germ of life in an egg cannot die unless it is boiled or goes rotten. In the former case the boiler incurs mortal danger from breaking one of the Five Precepts; in the latter the egg is undesirable. In small villages almost every one keeps a tè-gyet, a decoy cock, for luring the wild jungle-fowl. The fore-doomed hunter kills the game, and the pious owner of the decoy bird gets a good dinner. Similarly tè-gyoh, pigeons, are bred specially as lures. Ordinary pigeons, occasionally used for the same purpose, go by the name of gyoh ta-nyin. Caged birds are not very common as pets, though every here and there one comes across a hill Mina, who has acquired a fair knowledge of the vernacular, and astonishes passers-by with the unceremonious way in which he hails them. But the Buddhist religion condemns keeping animals in confinement. So much is this the case that in Mandalay, and here and there in other places, there are men who make a regular living by catching birds and selling them to the pious, that they may gain merit by setting them free. Crafty birdcatchers are able so far to disable the bird, without doing it any material or visible harm, that they can catch it again immediately after their tender-hearted customer has gone his way. It used to be a common thing in the palace, during the

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late king's reign, to let loose a number of birds for the delectation of foreign worshippers at the golden feet, and the expansion of the royal merit. Ill-natured people said all the birds were recaptured in the next room, and appeared again for the next display of charity; but of that I can say nothing.

Each house, with its ground, is surrounded by a rude fence more or less substantial according to the character of the district. Where there are many tigers or dacoits, and especially north of Mandalay, where the Kachins may swoop down any night, this is made very high and strong, and is further rendered effective by a formidable array of sharpened bamboos. Except where the British have taken the matter in hand, the village roads are simply places where the jungle is kept from growing. There is no attempt at metalling; in fact there is no material for the purpose. In some pretentious villages indeed there is a raised path formed of bricks set on edge, and about three feet broad. This is regarded as a public work of great value, and a distinction to the inhabitants of the place. It usually leads to the monastery. In many villages however it would be impossible to move about during the rains without some such contrivance. The mud would be too deep, and logs are slippery even to bare feet.

Swinging by a couple of ropes from the roof hangs in the centre of the house a rude basket, made snug with a blanket or some old clothes. This is the baby's cradle, and the mother may often be seen sitting by it crooning and gently swaying it backwards and forwards. Some of the lullabies are very clever. I have tried to give a version of one of the most popular, with as near an approach to the metre as practicable. It is sung to the favourite tay-dat air.

SEHN-NEE LA-YOUNG.

Clouds in Heaven,
Bright as levin,
Dyed with rosy diamond's light,
Did the Nine Gems
Stud your white hems,
Silver moonbeams
Cast their chill gleams,
But to make black darkness vanish,
Sweet sleep from my babe's eyes banish?
Fairies wiled him,
Dreams beguiled him,
In his cradle wrapped so snugly,
Cradle carved with nayas[1] ugly,
Carved with Nats and Kings and Princes,
Every splendour that evinces
Royal state and princely usance.
There he slept, when what a nuisance!
Comes the light
To affright
And scare him back to home from elfin land.

Sweet, my babe, your father's coming,
Rest and hear the songs I'm humming;
He will come and gently tend you,
Rock your cot and safe defend you;
Mother's setting out his dinner—
Oh, you naughty little sinner!
What a yell from such a wee thing,
Couldn't be worse if you were teething.
My sweet round mass of gold,
Now pray do what you're told.
Be quiet and good,
As nice boys should.
Oh, you plaguy, nasty brat!
I must call the great big cat,
He will come and squeeze and bite,
Scratch and eat you up outright.

[1] A naya is a dragon with four legs. The word used here, myat è yin, is specially reserved for royal cradles. The plebeian article is ca-hket. Throughout, the language is of the most honorific character.

Puss, puss, puss, you great big pussy!
Here's a boy so nice and juicy,
Let the mice have one night's pleasure,
You shall eat him at your leisure.

Nasty, naughty, noisy baby,
If the cat won't, Nats will maybe
Come and pinch and punch and rend you.
If they do I won't defend you.
Oh, now please,
Do not tease.
Do be good,
As babies should,
Just one tiny little while;
Try to sleep, or try to smile.
My prince, my sweet gold blood, my son;
Ordained a regal race to run,
Listen to your mother's coaxing,
Listen to the song good folks sing.
When little boys
Make such a noise,
Comes the brownie
On wings downy,
Comes the wood sprite
In the dark night,
Witch and warlock,
Mere and tor-folk,
Kelpie, nikker,
Quick and quicker,
Gobble all bad babies up.

Mercy, what an awful squall!
Don't you love mamma at all?
Where's your father? Fie, for shame!
He could quiet you if he came.
But he won't; he lolls and smokes,
With the neighbours cracks his jokes.
He's just as bad as you, tah-tay,[1]
Plagues poor mamma and stays away.

[1] Tah-tay, according to the consent of the Burmese nursery literature, is the typical bad boy.

Now I tell you
This to quell you,
Both shall rue it.
Thus I'll do it,
Neither shall have any dinner;
You no sweet milk,
He no meat ilk,
You'll be good when you are thinner.

The King alone you dread on earth,
The wise man said it at your birth,
Said that all the stars would love you,
None on earth should be above you;
But I'm sure that in the palace
Princes never shriek for malice.
Now I'll sing the eighty ditties,[1]
Known in all the royal cities,
Lullabies so soft and drowsy
E'en the Nat-soh could not rouse ye.
Hush my babe, my prince, my treasure,
List the poppy's slumbrous measure.

[1] "The eighty ditties," a very old and well-known palace lullaby.

CHAPTER X.

THE EARTH AND ITS BEGINNING.

THE Lord Buddha cared very little for speculations, or theories as to the construction and extent of the terrestrial globe, or as to the size and motions of the sun, the moon, and the stars. Shin Gautama was entirely a moral philosopher, concerned with the workings of the mind, whose highest aim was to despise matter and free itself from such trammels in the progress towards Neh'ban. The consideration of natural phenomena was therefore entirely outside the province of the true sage. It is probable therefore that the transmogrified Hindu system which does duty for Burmese cosmography was elaborated rather by the Buddha's disciples than by himself. It has been altered only to suit Buddhistic religious views, with here and there the fancies of a lively imagination thrown in, but the outline of it existed before Prince Theidat came.

The Burmese are therefore certainly not responsible for it, but as some knowledge of the system is necessary for the comprehension of various superstitions, phrases, and forms of speech, it may be desirable to give a slight sketch of these astronomical and cosmical theories.

The word lawka means a whole revolution of nature. The world is being constantly destroyed and reproduced, but each lawka lasts an incalculable length of years. It

is divided into four periods, and it is not till the arrival of the fourth period that man appears upon earth. During that last period, divided into sixty-four Andrakaps, the life of man must, in each Andrakap, wax from ten years to an Athinkaya (a time represented by a unit and a hundred and sixty-four ciphers, one and a half quintillion years), and then gradually wane to ten years again, on account respectively of the merit and demerit in the world. We are now in the waning term of the eleventh Andrakap. The Buddhas only appear upon earth during the waning season of man's life, chiefly of course to stay the increasing influence of evil by preaching the law, and also because when man's life is slowly lengthening to an Athinkaya he is not so disposed to listen to their teaching. 100,000 years before the destruction of the world the Dewahs come down from their six blissful seats and wander about the earth with dishevelled hair and mournful garb, proclaiming the sad tidings of the impending destruction of the world. Once again a hundred years before the cataclysm they come, and all mankind strives to raise itself beyond the influence of the destroying element. The world must be destroyed in any case, but there are three great principles of demerit which determine by what means the catastrophe will be effected. Concupiscence is the most common and the least heinous of these principles, and the world of the lustful will be destroyed by fire. Next comes anger, a more grievous sin than concupiscence, and the world ruined by the principle of anger will be destroyed by water. Worst of all is the sin of ignorance. The world of the ignorant will be scattered about the bounds of space by a mighty rushing wind, which beginning so gently as barely to move the leaves and flowers, ends by breaking up with its irresistible force the vast bulk of Mount Myemmoh and the Sekyahwala circle of hills. Of sixty-four worlds,

fifty-six are destroyed by fire, seven by water, and one by wind. Fire reaches to the fifth seat of the Rupa, the beings called Perfect. Water mounts higher by three seats to the eighth of the Byammahs, and wind one seat beyond this. Out of the thirty-one seats of the world there remain therefore only eleven undestroyed. The Four States of Punishment, the abode of man, the six blissful seats of Nats; and five, eight or nine of the lofty dwellings of the Rupa, according to the destroying agent, are altogether overwhelmed and dispersed throughout space. The seven highest seats of the Byammahs and the four of Arupa, where dwell the Immaterials, who having broken all ties with the material world, are ripe for Neh'ban, these eleven seats only remain constantly undisturbed.

Then there is chaos for an athinkaya. When that mighty season has passed, rain begins to fall again throughout infinity. Fire, water, or wind may destroy the world, but water alone can reproduce it, though both the sun and the wind have minor parts to play. The drops gradually increase in size till they reach the volume of five, ten, a hundred, even a thousand yoozanas (a yoozana being about twelve miles English). The wind blows the water together in the spot occupied by the last world. A greasy scum gathers on the surface. The action of the sun gradually hardens this into a crust, which eventually assumes the exact appearance and shape of the last world. The Lord Buddha himself, it is written, did not know which was the first world and which would be the last. Many learned writers say that there is neither a beginning nor an end to the production and destruction of worlds. It will go on for ever like a great wheel, even as the great wheel of the Law itself. Since sorrow then is shadow to life, how should all beings strive to escape

from the vortex of existences? In the *Abeedamma* we read that there are two descriptions of worlds, called Thohn-ya Kabah and A-thohn-ya Kabah, that is to say, worlds to which the Buddhas came, and those to which they did not come. Some think that the latter kind of worlds must have been uninhabited. However that may be, it is certain that the law has always existed. It existed Kalpas and Mahakalpas before the first Budh came to this earth. The Buddhas only revive the knowledge of it among creatures upon the painful ladder of existence. Our present world, called Badda, has been particularly favoured. Already four Buddhas have appeared, and when the dispensation of Shin Gautama shall have passed away two thousand five hundred years hence, there will come another, Areemadehya, whose stature will exceed the highest mountains in all the Southern Island.

The system of the world as explained by the Buddhist Yahandas is somewhat different from that adopted by western men of science. In the centre is the Myemmoh Toung, Mount Meru, the highest peak of all the world. Its shape is somewhat peculiar, like a cask floating end upwards in water. A height of 84,000 yoozanas above the sea is counterbalanced by as many of depth below the surface. It is supported on three feet, each a huge ruby or carbuncle. In the space between these feet dwell the Athooya, the Nats who were tempted to drink by new arrivals in the seat of Tohtheeta, and when overcome by the liquor were hurled into the sea by their crafty rivals. At various heights on the central mountain are ranged the six blissful seats of the Dewahs, but many of them dwell elsewhere. Thus, for example, the sun, the moon, and most of the stars and planets are simply gorgeous dwellings of Nats. Away in the empyrean, rising perpendicularly one above the other, are the sixteen seats of Rupa, where the Byammahs, the

Perfect, dwell. These have got rid of almost all the passions, but especially of concupiscence. It is not till they have freed themselves from all affection for matter and material things that they can pass beyond to the incalculable heights of the four seats of Arupa, where the Immaterials dwell in a state of sublimest contemplation waiting only for the moment when they shall pass beyond into Neh'ban. Down below the earth, in a mass of hard rock, are the eight great Hells and the numberless smaller ones. Surrounding the Myemmoh Toung and girdling round the earth are the seven ranges of the Sekyahwala mountains, with seven seas interposed. In the sea round about Mount Myemmoh, the great Thamohddaya Ocean, are the four great islands—Ohttayakooroo to the north, Pyohppaweedayha to the east, Aparagawyan to the west, and Zampoodeepa to the south. In the Southern Island dwells the race of man. Each of the great islands has five hundred smaller ones round about it, and in these islands dwell the English and other nations other than the Buddhists and the Indian heretics.

The Thamohddaya sea is too stormy to allow of any one passing from one of the great islands to any other. The Southern Island is the largest, and is shaped like a trapezium. The Western Island is like the full moon, the Northern is square, and Pyohppaweedayha is shaped like the moon in her quarters. The shape of the head of the different inhabitants follows the shape of the island, and the different sides of Mount Meru give their different colours to each island. Thus the Eastern Island is all white from being opposite to the silver face of the mountain; the Western is green, because on that side Myemmoh is of glass; the Northern Island glitters like gold, and the Southern is a pale-coloured brown like carbuncle. Each island is named from the great tree which grows upon it

and forms the sacred insignia of the island. Thus the Southern Island is named from the Zampoo tree, the great Eugenia.

The Eastern, Western, and Northern islands are very pleasant to dwell in, but especially the Northern. There the people live to the age of a thousand years, and always appear to be no more than eighteen. In the other islands they only live to be five hundred. In other respects the Northern Island is a regular land of Cockayne. The fabled Padaytha Bin, elsewhere only found in the happy countries of the Nats, grows there. From its bounteous branches hang the most gorgeous dresses of every variety of colour, and the happy islanders have only to take them off. Nor are they at any necessity to till the ground to procure themselves food. From this tree they obtain also an abundant supply of a most excellent kind of rice, already husked to their hands. All that they have to do is to place it on a certain large stone, and it is forthwith cooked, and upon the branches of the trees round about appear the most dainty meats. Truly the Northern islanders have a most enviable existence. But in one respect, like the inhabitants of the Eastern and Western isles, they are unhappy. They are always born back to the same island. They cannot raise themselves in the scale of being, like the otherwise sorrowful Southern islanders. Only in Zampoodeepa do the Buddhas appear to teach the law and free the people from constant deaths and reappearances. From Tahingaya, the first Buddha, to Shin Gautama, under whose dispensation we now live, there have been twenty-eight Buddhas, and all of them have come to the great Southern Island. To Byammahs, to Nats, even to animals and the agonised dwellers in the lowest hells, the blessed words have come, but never to those other dwellers in the islands of the great sea Thamohddaya. Thus are

men enabled to attain to the state of Nats, to pass through the seats of Rupa and Arupa, until finally, freed from passion and sorrow and the trammels of matter, they sink into the bliss of Neh'ban. Therefore have pious writers of old called the Southern Island Neh'ban's ferry.

Down below the earth, in the deepest recesses of the Southern Island, are the eight great Hells, surrounded by 40,040 smaller ones. Four of the great Hells are called Awidzee, and in addition to other tortures, terrible flames leap from wall to wall across the monstrous space, and extend on all sides beyond for a thousand yòozanas. The other four are called Lawkantyè, and there, instead of flames, we find hideous cold. A day in any of these places of torment is as long as thousands of mundane years.

The world having been created is as yet uninhabited. Our present earth, Badda, was peopled in the following way. From the seats of Zahn, to which the destructive element had not reached, camè down certain Byammahs, some say three, some as many as nine. Holy people as they were and freed from all passions, they existed at first, like Adam and Eve, in a state of perfect bliss and innocence. They were not as thè Kahma, the generating beings of the Four States of Punishment and the Seven States of Happiness—that of man and the six seats of Nats. But, like Adam and Eve, they fell into sin and thence into misery. First we read that they prayed for light. We may imagine that already the spiritual light had forsaken them, for in answer to their prayers appeared the sun, the moon, and the stars. The holy people had hitherto lived on a flavoured earth, which, however, driven away by their growing desire for matter, vanished and gave place to another species of food, a sweet creeping plant called Pahdahlahtah. This was perfect in odour and flavour, but still the appetites of the people grew, and the

Pahdahlahtah was taken away and in its place appeared the Thalay san, a peculiarly fine kind of rice, which grew ready husked, and had only to be put in a pot, when it would cook itself. But by eating the Thalay rice, the Byammahs became more and more gross, until, like Adam and Eve after eating the apple, they attained a knowledge of good and evil, and marriage was instituted. After this the Thalay san became more and more scarce. At first, no matter how much was eaten, at night the portion which had been cut during the day reappeared; but when the first people fell into the sin of lust the rice gradually vanished. Where the rice was cut in the morning, there remained a bare patch at night. Since then man has had to labour, and earn his bread with the sweat of his brow.

Owing to the scarcity, crime first appeared in the world. One man fearing that his stock would not last him went and stole from his neighbours' barns. Thus theft was the first crime committed in the world. The man whose rice was stolen at first only scolded the thief and let him go. The robber however did not care for this, and came back a second and a third time. The third time he was seized and beaten. Thus out of the original crime of thievery arose abuse, reviling, assault, falsehood, and then punishments. In this way did crime and consequently law and justice take their origin, and have lasted since the very beginning of the world. Hitherto on account of the happy state in which the people had lived, without crime and without punishments, every one had been equal, and there had been no necessity for marking different grades. As however crime increased, and with it revenge, more or less sweeping according to temperament, the people took counsel together and resolved to appoint a man to be ruler over them, who should regulate their affairs and punish wrong doers. Thus a king was first appointed, and his

revenue was derived from tithes given by the people. Each man set apart a tenth of his thalay san for the support of the king. The tithe system was kept up among the Burmese, the most direct in descent from the original people, until a few years ago. The kings extended the system. The rulers and governors of provinces received in place of salary the tithes of the districts which were under their charge. But the late king, Mindohn Min, finding that with unscrupulous men the method was liable to abuse, abolished the system of tithes, and introduced the English method of paying a regular salary. It has not however worked well. Many of the myo-sahs, finding that they did not receive their money regularly from the State, continued to exact tithes as before, only secretly and with many cunning devices to hide what they were doing. It is probable therefore that the custom of the ancients will be reintroduced.

The appointment of a ruler to punish crime was therefore the second source of the law, and the first source of the administration of justice. The first king chosen was a Payah-loung, a person destined in future ages to be a Buddha, and therefore of great sanctity and wisdom, and one who strictly conformed to the five natural and religious laws incumbent on all men, namely, not to murder, steal, commit adultery, drink fermented liquors, or speak falsely. From these immediately sprang the four thingahas or kingly laws, and the first laws laid down by the Payah-loung were with regard to the twenty-five descriptions of theft, the ten kinds of assault, and the twenty-seven kinds of abusive language.

Notwithstanding the institution of a source of administrative justice, crime continued to increase, and those who wished to escape from its evil influences retired to the jungles and there built small houses for themselves, or gained a living by begging from village to village.

Thus rose the caste of the Brahmins. Those who built themselves houses and acquired wealth by agriculture and trade, were called thatay thoo-gywè, rich men, while those who were unfortunate and oppressed sank into the state of poverty and were called thoo sinyè. Thus arose the legal classification of the people.

The first king, Mahahthamada as he was called, probably had a written code, but it has been superseded or lost. The laws which now guide us were drawn up by Menu, originally a cowherd, but afterwards a minister. To these laws all others owe their existence, for we read that in Greece, the earliest civilized country in Europe, Menu was styled Minos in Crete, and first gave them laws. In this way polity was established in the Southern Island. The original people soon greatly increased, and multiplied, and dispersed themselves not only all over the mainland, but some even went to the smaller islands round about, as did the English to the Pyee Gyee. Just as the children of one father take different names, so the different peoples took to themselves different titles, according to the part of the earth they settled in. Just also as some children in a family are good and some bad, so a few races preserved the sacred law of the Lord Buddha, and some fell away into lamentable heresies. Many of them still retain reminiscences of the teachings of the Great Master. Thus the Bible of the Christians contains moral precepts in a great measure identical with the sentiments conveyed in the thoughts or sermons of the Lord Buddha. There is even confirmation, in the mention of the ages of Methuselah and other men of old, of the doctrine of the waxing and waning term of human life. Some learned Sadaws have held that the Lord Jesus is Dewadat, the cousin of Shin Gautama, who was always trying to overthrow the good works of the Buddha; and it is well known that the

Siamese speak of the evil Dewadat as the God of Europe, and the causer of all the evil in the world. This opinion is not however generally held, and the best thing a Burman can wish for a good Englishman is that in some future existence, as a reward of good works, he may be born a Buddhist and if possible a Burman. For that the Burmese are most nearly descended from the original holy people, their name Byammah or Bamah evidently shows, while no other nation preserves the sacred law more carefully and more exactly in its form as it came from the lips of the Lord Buddha himself. Moreover, the Burmese monarchs retain the titles given to Mahahthamada, the first king, and his immediate successors, and therefore they rank above all others.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LADDER OF EXISTENCE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the change, the pain, and the vanity of everything upon earth, yet the Loo-pyee, the Manoht-tha-bohng, the state of man, is desirable beyond all others. Transience, misery, unreality, prevail in all the thirty-one seats of the world, even in the twenty superior heavens, where those acted on by Kahma, generating beings, find no entrance. The Dewahs come down to our earth from their six seats of bliss; the Byammahs, even to the fourth state of Zahn, are occasionally found in earthly guise in the precincts of holy monasteries; even Yahandas, who have entered into Thohda, the current of perfection, and after death attain the dreamful joy of Neh'ban, the cessation from existence, even these immaterial beings diffuse a saintly presence over the Southern Island. The great Lord Gautama appeared in the seat of man and preached the sacred law, and he preached it there because all the twenty-seven Buddhas before him had done the same, and when he preached it on that soft Indian eve,

> "I know it writ that they who heard
> Were more—lakhs more—crores more—than could be seen,
> For all the Devas and the Dead thronged there,
> Till Heaven was emptied to the seventh zone,

And uttermost dark Hells opened their bars;
Also the daylight lingered past its time
In rose-leaf radiance on the watching peaks,
So that it seemed Night listened in the glens
And Noon upon the mountains; yea! they write,
The Evening stood between them like some maid,
Celestial, love-struck, rapt; the smooth-rolled clouds
Her braided hair; the studded stars the pearls
And diamonds of her coronal; the moon
Her forehead jewel, and the deepening dark
Her woven garments. 'Twas her close-held breath
Which came in scented sighs across the lawns
While our Lord taught, and, while he taught, who heard—
Though he were stranger in the land, or slave,
High caste or low, come of the Aryan blood,
Or Mlech or Jungle-dweller, seemed to hear
What tongue his fellows talked. Nay, outside those
Who crowded by the river, great and small,
The birds and beasts and creeping things—'tis writ—
Had sense of Buddha's vast embracing love
And took the promise of his piteous speech;
So that their lives—prisoned in shape of ape,
Tiger, or deer, shagged bear, jackal, or wolf,
Foul-feeding kite, pearled dove, or peacock gemmed,
Squat toad, or speckled serpent, lizard, bat;
Yea, or of fish fanning the river-waves—
Touched meekly at the skirts of brotherhood
With man who hath less innocence than these;
And in mute gladness knew their bondage broke
Whilst Buddha spake these things before the King."

—*The Light of Asia.*

And since that time some few have passed from our earth to Neh'ban, where the silence lives; "seeking nothing, they gained all." But far the most have failed; some have sunk to the Four States of Punishment; some have risen to the blissful seats of Nats; fewer have passed beyond to the meditative realms of Zahn.

It is written that the life of man waxes from ten years to the huge period of an Athinkaya, and then wanes to ten years again. How is it, then, that some men live

beyond a hundred years, and others die almost ere they have drawn breath? The reason is that some have taken no life at all in previous existences, and that others have, unwittingly perhaps, destroyed many creatures, and their own existence is correspondingly graduated. To maintain his dignity of man it is absolutely necessary that a human being must observe, as far as his powers admit, the Five great Precepts. Failure to observe these will infallibly result in a fall in the next existence into the States of Punishment.

It will be well to begin the ladder of existence at the lowest rung, at the worst of these four states. This is Nga-yè, hell—the most hideous of all. Even in Nga-yè there are gradations: the one mighty seat is divided into eight great holds, arranged one below the other, all with punishments so terrible that none can be said to exceed any other in hideousness. The names of all the eight great chambers, from Thehnzoh above to Awizee the nethermost hell, are given, but a detailed catalogue is unnecessary. Each great hell is surrounded by sixteen inferior places of torture called Ohtthad-daret. From west to east the flames stream through all the mighty space and pass through on the other side to a distance of a thousand yoozanas, and from east to west the same. From north to south, from Nadir to Pole, and Pole to Nadir, it is the same, and yet the torments of this heat are but a tithe of the gruesome tortures the sinner must suffer. The life of the Dewahs in Tawa-dehntha is reckoned at sixteen million human years. That period is but as a day and night in Kahlathoht, the second hell. Thirty such days and nights make a month, twelve months one year; and the wicked in the Kahlathoht hell must pass one thousand such horrible years. The Nats in Toht-theeta live five hundred and seventy-six million

years, which is but as one revolving sun and moon to the tenants of Yawruwa. Of such appalling days they must make up a tale of four thousand agonising years. The miserable wretches in Awizee work out the evil of their sins only in the space of an Andrakap, a period so vast that the mind cannot grasp it. As if these punishments were not sufficient to scare the weak and ignorant from sin, it has been revealed what other tortures await the damned. In one of the Ten Great Sacred Mystery Plays it is related how a pious prince was shown the horrors of hell. The terrible pictures of the sixth book of the *Æneid*, the awful imaginings of Dante's poem, are outdone by the flesh-creeping minuteness of the Naymee Zaht. The prince saw men devoured by five-headed dogs, by famished vultures, by loathsome crows, the flesh being renewed as fast as the foul creatures tore it away; he saw others crushed beneath the weight of vast white-hot mountains, stretched on fiery bars and cut up with burning knives and flaming saws, their hearts slowly scratched and pierced with fiery needles, flame entering at the mouth and licking up the vitals, fiends all about, hacking, hewing, stabbing, lacerating the body with all that the human mind has imagined hideous, and all this, and ten times more, which it were only disgusting to write down, continued with never-abated torture to the wretched victims. The lesser hells are no less horrible; that of ordure, where huge stinging serpents and gnawing worms fasten on the sinners who are there immersed; those of burning coals, swords and knives, molten lead, fiery hammers which crush the bones at every stroke; that where the heart, lungs, and liver are torn out with hooks and slowly sliced and ever renewed. Occasionally the damned are transferred to the Lawkantyè hells, situated in the intermediate spaces between the Sekyah worlds, where the

tortures are those of frightful cold. Enough, however, has been said about the horrors of hell. The crimes which condemn a man, and the hell to which he is sent, are all duly recorded; but as one hell is as bad as another, it is unnecessary to recount these particulars. Suffice it to say that the man who scoffs at the Buddha and derides the law will remain, throughout a whole revolution of nature, an entire Lawka, transfixed head downwards on a red-hot spit, in the lowest hell, hacked, gnawed, crushed, and beaten by all that is most awesome in all the flaming realms.[1]

The State of Punishment above that of hell is that of the Thoorakè. Their miseries are various. Some are keepers of hell by day or by night, themselves suffering all the horror of the terrible heat, assuming the form of man at other times. Others feed on their own flesh and blood, and tear themselves with great hooks. Some are six miles high, with projecting crab's eyes, short lids, and a mouth the size of an ordinary mortal's, so that they are incessantly tormented by hunger. Above them are the Pyehtta, who in many respects resemble them in their sufferings. They wander on desert sea-shores and mountains, and in dismal forests, far from the abodes of man, naked and continually lamenting. Some have huge bodies

[1] There are twenty-one kinds of people who will fall into the lowest hell. Nineteen, however, if they see the error of their ways, and attend the pagodas with goodly offerings, may be redeemed; but the hunter and the fisherman cannot be saved. The impious Dewadat, cousin and brother-in-law of the Buddha, and who tried to kill him, suffers terrible punishment. His feet are sunk ankle-deep in burning marl. His head is incased with a red-hot pan that caps it down to the lobe of the ears. Two large red-hot bars transfix him from back to front, two horizontally from right to left, and one impales him from head to foot. But since he repented when he sank into the earth to his doom, he will become a Pyitsega Buddha, under the name of Aheesara, in coming ages.

with a mouth no larger than the eye of a needle, so that they can never satiate their craving for food. Others have huge, gluttonous mouths, always seeking to devour, but with no stomach in which the food can be received. Maggots, earth-worms, ants, and the like are often called Pyehtta, because they live on excrements and all manner of filth. This state is the one specially assigned to misers and niggardly, uncharitable people.

The highest of the Four States of Punishment is that of Tarehsan, or animals. Those who do not keep a guard over their passions, who are abusive, and who refrain from giving alms, will fall into the Bohng of animals. Just as one man by reason of previous merits is born a prince, while another barely scrapes into human existence as an outcast pagoda slave, a grave-digger, a leper, or a heretic, so there are grades in the state of animals. To be an elephant is of course nearly as good as being a man; to be a white elephant is usually very much better. Any herbivorous animal is in a better state than a creature which eats flesh. Lions, tigers, and all life-destroying creatures are particularly undesirable transincorporations. The vulture is highly honoured because it never takes life, but lives entirely on carrion. Some animals are particularly esteemed as having been incarnations of the Lord Buddha. Such are the white elephant, the hare, the pigeon. Shin Gautama's first existence was in the form of a little bird, and all the stages he passed through in after existences are recorded in the Ten Great Zahts and the five hundred and ten minor tales. He who would cross the ferry to Neh'ban may learn from them how he may do so, and how miserable the toil is. Who would not seek the higher paths when he sees what the alternative is?

Raised from the Four States of Punishment to the

Manoht-tha Bohng, where as man the law is open to his study, the creature on his upward path should not be lightly stayed. To rise from the seat of man to that of Nats seems simple. Observe but the Five Precepts, give alms, live peaceably with all men, attend regularly at the pagodas on the appointed days that the image and model there presented to you may strengthen your resolution, do but live a respectable life, and the end is gained; you pass to the dwellings of the Dewahs, there to spend long years of bliss. Good works will do much, but it is especially necessary to observe the Five Precepts. You must keep them in your mind every day, as you put your clothes on your body. The Ten Precepts must be kept on holy days, four times in every lunar month and throughout all Lent; these, and the daily giving of alms to the mendicants, will save you; your next existence will be in the Heavens of the Nats.

The Nat-pyee Chouk-tap, the six blissful seats, the highest of the Kahma Bohng, the worlds of passion, are ranged on and around Mount Myemmoh. Like the eight Hells they all have names, beginning with Zatoo-ma-harit and ending with Para-nehmmeeta Wot-thawatee. The second and the fourth Heavens are the best known; for to Tawadehntha the Lord Buddha ascended in three steps to preach the law to his mother, the sainted Queen Maya, and countless Byammahs and Immaterials from the far realms of Rupa and Arupa came to hear; and from Toht-theeta the embryo Budh descended to take flesh as Prince Theidat. The length of life in Tawadehntha is a thousand Dewah's years, that is, in earthly reckoning, nine millions. Similarly the four thousand of Toht-theeta are in human calendars five hundred and seventy-six million years.

Take up any book of fairy tales you have; revive your recollection of the *Arabian Nights;* recall any dream

when you thought you had made your fortune, and you have a picture of the six blissful seats. A vision of song and dancing, beautiful and fragrant flowers, delicious fruits, palm-trees bearing, in place of leaves, rich garments and priceless ornaments and dainty cates, great gorgeous palaces with crystal pavements, golden columns and jewelled walls; a tinkling of gold and silver bells, intoxicating music—everything the most fervid imagination can picture, all are found in these happy realms. Prince Naymee was granted a sight of them as well as of the horrors of hell.

Passion still prevails, but it becomes less and less sensual the higher we rise. In Toht-theeta a touch of the hand satisfies love; in the fifth seat, lovers simply gaze on each other; and in the sixth, existence in the same place is enough. The Nat of the highest Bohng is not far from the twenty superior heavens.

Passage to the Dewah seats is obtained by the strict observance of the precepts and the regular performance of good works; the step beyond can only be accomplished by the aid of the intellect. Ignorance is always the chief hindrance to rise in the scale of worlds; it is especially so in the case of the superior heavens. The twenty higher seats can only be reached by concentrated meditation; by the performance of good works, not outwardly by the body, but inwardly by the soul. The three fundamental principles of Anehsa, Dohkka, Anatta—transience, pain, vanity—must first be intently examined. Then we must pass on through the five kinds of meditation, the highest of which is Oopekka, which brings perfect fixity, whence originates callousness to pleasure or pain, scorn or affection. Thus we pass through the successive stages of contemplation which lead us through the sixteen seats of Rupa, each of which constitute the first, second, and

third Zahns—Thawtapan, Thakadagam, Anagam; the tenth and eleventh seats form the fourth Zahn, and in the five highest, the Yahandas have entered on Thohda, on the current of perfection.

Thus we reach to the verge of the four immaterial superior heavens. To enter these we must get rid of all affection for matter. The thirty-two parts of the body are often mentioned in prayer by pious Buddhists, each part with its forty-four subdivisions. On these we must ponder till we understand and see the worthlessness of them. Then we must repeat ten thousand times "the firmament, or the æther, is immeasurable," till at length we reach the first Seht or idea of Arupa.

Thence we progress in contempt for matter till at last we are delivered from the three Thagnya, or false persuasions, and reaching the topmost seat of Arupa, Naywa-thagnya-nathagnya-yatana, tremble on the verge of Neh'ban.

What is Neh'ban?

"If any teach Nirvana is to cease,
Say unto such they lie;
If any teach Nirvana is to live,
Say unto such they err."

The common illustration of the schools will not suffice for matter-of-fact Western heretics. You tell them life is like a lamp, with its wick and its little lake of oil. It may be kindled and extinguished many times, fresh oil may be added, other lamps kindled from it, but at length the oil is exhausted, the flame flickers and dies away for ever. That is annihilation, you say. It is not. When a man dies and goes to Neh'ban he ceases to be individualised; he is no more agitated by existence, wretched in itself, still more wretched from the woes it reveals in others; he falls into a calm and never-ending cessation

of existence; he knows nothing of others, or of the world, and so is a stranger to all feelings of joy or sorrow; he contemplates fixedly the abstract truth, which even the highest Immaterials cannot, perpetually; but he is not annihilated as the heretics assert; nor does he slip, like the dew-drop, into the shining sea; he is not absorbed into the supreme Buddha, as the Brahmins loosely say; he remains perpetually in a sacred calm, unmoved by any feeling whatever, in lifeless, timeless bliss.

The teachers strive to give a detailed explanation, but who can know? who can tell for certain the composition and economy of even the nearest star? They tell us this: Neh'ban is the extinction of Kan, the soul of recurring existences, the influence of merits and demerits, exemption from which means utter cessation from existences; Neh'ban is the stifling of Seht, the fire of passions, the entire hundred and twenty volitions and desires; Neh'ban is the cessation of Ootoo, exemption from revolving years, from the changes of seasons, from the variations of heat and cold, darkness and light; Neh'ban is the death of Ahahya, taste, typefying all the senses; Neh'ban is, in fact, the going out of all that we know as making up a living being; there remains behind what no one can name and few even picture to themselves, and those who attempt it do so according to their individual fancies.[1]

In regard to the Lord Buddha himself, we are told that there are in reality three stages in Neh'ban. The first was the Neh'ban of Keelaytha, of the earthly passions, when under the Baw-dee Bin, the sacred banyan-tree, he renounced all and became a Buddha. The second was the Neh'ban of Khanda, when near Kohthaynarohn, he

[1] When a person recovers from a grievous illness we can only say that to be free from infirmities is to recover one's health. So we say that a man has attained to Neh'ban when he is freed from the sorrows of existences.

expired in the grove of sahl-trees, when the five supports of existence gave way and he finally departed from the thirty-one seats of the world. The third and last, the Neh'ban of Daht, will not be for nearly two thousand five hundred years, five thousand from the day of his death. Then the duration of the Great Master's teachings will have ceased, his cycle will have lapsed, and all his relics from all parts of the world will be miraculously gathered together into the place where the original Baw-dee Bin stood; there will be many wondrous signs, and then all but the memory of him will be gone, the complete Neh'ban will have been attained.

The definition may be vague, and the monks of Burma, Siam, Japan, Ceylon, Thibet, and China may each have their own definition, but there is the same difficulty to be found in all religions with regard to the last mystery. Who can find agreement in the variety of Christian descriptions of the future life, where one places happiness in the eternal singing of songs and in feastings, another in gazing on the Deity, a third, with greater modesty, hopes to creep in by the door of which St. Peter holds the keys. Buddhists have in their six heavens and twenty superior seats a choice of every kind of bliss, suited to every liking. They have the Islamite delights of sense in the heavens of Dewas with the houri nat-daughters. Then for the various kinds of meditation and mysticism they have the contemplative Byammah seats, while the four seats of Arupa afford room for the most transcendental speculation.

Yet all these ideal realms of phantasy—the dreams of sense, of contemplation and mystic trance—have nothing to do with the state of Neh'ban. It is not a "nothing." A "nothing" that can be imagined is an all, for according to the laws of thought, non-existence can only be understood in a relative sense. The Buddhist system is much

too logical to trouble itself with such incomprehensible problems, and in order to create no false impressions, the teachers surround the last state with the utmost possible uncertainty of expression. The Buddhist yearns to return from the endless whirl and turmoil of existences to the calm of the first beginning.

CHAPTER XII.

THE NOBLE ORDER OF THE YELLOW ROBE.

"'That noble order of the yellow robe
Which to this day standeth to help the world."

ALL living creatures are plodding on

"the noble Eightfold Path which brings to peace;
By lower or by upper heights it goes,
The firm soul hastes, the feeble tarries. All
Will reach the sun-lit snows."

The monks in Lower Burma are fond of the comparison which steam lends them now. The holy fraternity are pushing on by mail train to the emancipation from constant successions of new births, while the weary layman toils along the dusty road on foot, or at best in a jolting bullock-cart; the mendicant pushes up the stream of life in a huge throbbing paddle steamer; the man yet in the world struggles along painfully against the current, and whirled about by eddies in a rude canoe. Why, then, cannot all set forth on the path alike? Partly because of ignorance and its consequences; partly because of the kan which forms each man's life:

The books say well, my Brothers! each man's life
The outcome of his former living is,
The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,
The bygone right breeds bliss.

A man's kan may be sufficient to gain him existence as a human being, but not enough to sustain him in the noble life of the yahan. He may enter the noble order, he must, indeed, if he would be other than a brute beast; but his kan, the sum of actions that make up his life, the soul of transmigrations, forces him to leave and enter the forest of the world, some from want of the gift of continence, some from ambition and desire for worldly power, some from a seeking after wealth, all from the predominance of some one of the hundred and twenty seht that incapacitate a man for the calm meditative life of the pyin-sin.

In the Lord Buddha's time, when a man adopted the faith, the requisites were belief in his teaching, a willingness to live in poverty and chastity, and under strict rules. All the applicant had to do was to renounce the ordinary pursuits of life, give up all his goods, take the vows, and he was forthwith a member of the Then-ga. From that time forward he lived in poverty, was dependent upon alms for his food, and upon charity for a shelter for his head; he was a behkkhoo, a mendicant, and only those who were such were Buddhists. But as the believers increased, it was evident that all could not wholly adopt the religious life. Many had faith, but not faith enough to support them in the strict rule of the society, and soon Buddhists became divided into the two classes of laymen who adopted and believed in the religious tenets, and the religious who abandoned the world entirely, and strove only to lead the higher life. Hence also arose the hierarchy of the order, which exists to a certain extent in Burma, though very far from approaching the completeness of the system of Thibet, where there is a pontifical court, an elective sacerdotal chief, and a college of superior Lamas. In this respect, however, Burman Buddhism is as much closer to the primitive order in polity as it is in

exact observance of the ordinations of the Weenee. Theoretically, in the sacred assembly there are but three classes:

The shin, the novice, who has put on the yellow robe without becoming a professed member of the order, and probably with no other desire than that of obtaining his "humanity." These are called ko-yins, moung-shins, and a variety of other names.

The oo-pyin-sin, those who, having lived a certain time in the monastery, have been formally admitted to the assembly with a prescribed ceremony, whereby the title of yahan is solemnly conferred. These are the pyit-shin, or religious.

Finally, there is the pohn-gyee, the "Great Glory," who by virtue of prolonged stay—ten years is the minimum—has proved his steadfastness and unflinching self-denial.

This division of the fraternity is not far removed from the classification of Shin Gautama's own time, when all people were regarded and addressed as dahyaka, laymen, who hear the preaching of the law, but are not yet converted to a firm acceptance of it; or oopathaka, not merely hearers of the law, but steadfast believers and practisers of its precepts. Nowadays the term dahyaka is applicable to all mankind, for it is open to all to seek for refuge in the Law of Good.

Practically, however, there is a slightly extended distinction of rank.

1. The Shin, the postulant.

2. The Pyit-shin, the religious, the full member of the order.

3. The Sayah, always a pohn-gyee, the head of each kyoung, or religious house, who controls all the inmates.

4. The Geing-oke, the provincial, who has a jurisdiction extending over all the monasteries of a cluster of villages

or over a whole district, giving advice in all the affairs of these communities, enforcing the rules against malcontents, and correcting any abuses.

5. The Sadaw, a royal teacher, or vicar-general of the order, who manages the entire affairs of the whole country, both British and Independent, in religious matters. These live in or near Mandalay, being summoned thither on their appointment. There are at present eight of them, all honoured with the title of Tha-thana-peing, *i.e.* supreme in matters appertaining to religion. It is a mistake to speak of *the* Tha-thana-peing as a sort of Burmese Buddhist pope. There is no such approximation to the heterodox Buddhism of Thibet, unless indeed the other sadaw-gyees have died, and there is but one remaining.

The teacher of the reigning king is always created a Sadaw, if indeed he has not been one before he was called upon to take a royal pupil. The respect paid to him by the king is paid, not as to the head of the religion, but as to the personal teacher. The Burman in his prayers, or rather his meditations for the good of others, prays for his teacher before his parents. The five pleasant things in the world are: the shade of trees, the shade of parents, the shade of teachers, the shade of princes, the shade of the Buddha.

It is this republican tendency of Buddhism that gives it such a wonderful hold on the people. Rank does not confer on the mendicant greater honour, or release him from any of his obligations. The most learned and famous Sadaw must go forth every morning to beg his daily food. If he is very aged and decrepit he may be excused to some extent, but every now and again he must totter forth to preserve the letter of the law and show a proper example of humility. His dress is the same as that of the most recently admitted koyin, and in the eyes of the world he

holds honour, not because he controls the affairs of the assembly, but because he is so close to the verge of Neh'ban. This feeling extends beyond the order into ordinary life. The religion brings all men down to the same level. The poor man may be a king of nats in the next life; the wealthy sinner may frizzle in the awful pains of hell. There is no difference between man and man but that which is established by superiority in virtue; and hence it is that the state of women among Buddhists is so very much higher than it is among Oriental peoples, who do not hold by that faith. The Burmese woman enjoys many rights which her European sister is even now clamouring for.

We have seen that the whole male population of Burma enters the monastery, and that the great majority leave after a very short stay. Some, however, grow fond of the monastic ways, and remain to study and qualify themselves to be mendicants. In becoming pyin-sin they do not acquire any new spiritual power, nor do they constitute themselves directly teachers of the people. In a religious system, which acknowledges no supreme Deity, it is impossible for any one to intercede with a Creator whose existence is denied, in behalf of a man who can only attain to a higher state by his own pious life and earnest self-denial. The religious are merely initiated into a higher stage, and become members of an order in which every individual is aiming at a greater degree of sanctity. The doors of the kyoung are always open as well to those who wish to enter as to those who wish to leave it. The longest stayer has the greatest honour. A visitor monk, who has the greater number of wahs, who has passed many lenten seasons in his yellow robe, will be shekhoh'd to, will receive the homage of the head of the monastery, even if he be a geing-oke, and the stranger but a simple pohn-gyee.

In his ordination, therefore, the pyin-sin takes upon

himself no burden in the shape of a cure of souls. He is not a priest like the Christian minister, who undertakes to guide others to salvation. He has no trouble for his food; a pious and kindly population supplies him far beyond his requirements, and expects no service in return for this support. He has no sermons to prepare; it is not expected that he will preach the law, and when of his own accord he occasionally does give an exposition, it is not any feeble excogitation of his own, but the thoughts and words of the Great Master himself, or of the highest and noblest of the men of old, that he delivers. His natural rest is never broken in upon by calls to administer consolation and comfort to the sick and the dying. Even his leisure is seldom interrupted to be present at the last rites for the dead. He is not a minister of religion, and all he has to do is to seek his own deliverance and salvation. All that is compulsory on him is the observance of continence, poverty, and humility, with tenderness to all living things, abstraction from the world, and a strict observance of a number of moral precepts, all tending to inculcate these things. It is curious perhaps, therefore, that greater numbers do not don the yellow robe. As it is, however, there is no lack of them.

Previous to admission the postulant must have reached the age of twenty years and have obtained his parents' permission.[1] The candidate must also give proof of a sufficient knowledge of the Payeht-gyee, the Padee-seht, the three Beetaghats, and the like. When it is understood

[1] The origin of this stipulation dates from the earliest times. When Gautama attained the Buddhaship his half-brother Nanda was next heir, and was about to be proclaimed Crown Prince when he was persuaded to become yahan. Thereupon Thoodaw-dana, the king, obtained a promise from the Buddha that ever after none should put on the celibate robe without his parents' consent.

that he has given satisfaction in these subjects, his friends provide for him the complete equipment of a mendicant, the sacred eight utensils which a pyin-sin cannot do without. These are:—

1. The dookoht, a piece of yellow cloth of rectangular shape, folded many times and worn over the left shoulder, with the ends hanging down behind and before.

2. The kohwoot, a piece of cloth worn round the loins and reaching to the ankles.

3. The thengbeing, a square-shaped cloth, yellow like the others, thrown cloak-fashion over the chest and shoulders, and coming down as far as the knees.

4. The thabeht, or begging-pot, worn suspended round the neck by a cord. It is shaped like a large circular soup-tureen with a rounded bottom, and has no lid. This must be carried round every morning to receive the alms of the pious.

5. The kaban, a leathern girdle used for binding on the kohwoot.

6. The pè-koht, a short-handled axe used for splitting firewood and the like.

7. An att, or needle.

8. A yaysit, a strainer, or water dipper, an apparatus for filtering the water which he drinks, so that he may not, even unwittingly, take animal life.

To these parehk-kaya shit-ba, these sacred eight utensils, is usually added an awana or yap, a lotus-leaf-shaped fan, made from a single palm frond, with an edging of bamboo or light wood, and furnished with a handle fashioned like the letter S. The leaf used is that of the Talapat palm, hence the name of Talapoins given to the members of the brotherhood by the early Portuguese adventurers in Burma. Every mendicant must have this fan with him when he goes to an assemblage where there

are likely to be women present, in order that he may be thus able to shut himself off from any temptation to carnal thoughts. The sight of half a dozen or more solemn-visaged monks sitting on their mats and coyly hiding their faces behind these big fans is apt to raise a smile on the face of a foreigner. But there is no doubt that the regulation is well advised. Women are the very devil!

When these necessaries have been provided, the candidate proceeds to the appointed building. This is always a thehn, a consecrated hall, built of teak, with open sides and the sacred three, five, or seven overlapping and diminishing roofs, not unlike the Albert Memorial in appearance, but much larger at the base. Here the examining body is assembled to the number of ten or twelve, ordinarily, but a minimum of four will suffice if the ceremony is conducted in the jungle. The senior is appointed oopitsee, or president, and a secretary is nominated, whose duty it is to bring forward the candidate and to read the Kammawahsah, the ritual of ordination. This is the most gorgeously ornamented of all the Burmese books. It is written, not in the ordinary round character, but in square letters painted on with a thick black resinous gum, and requires a special education to read it. The leaves are formed either of the ordinary palm-leaf, thickly covered with red lacquer, and profusely ornamented round the border and between the lines with gilded figures of nats and elaborate scroll-work, or in the case of the more sacred monasteries, of the king's discarded pasohs. None may wear these waistcloths after the Great King of Righteousness has tired of them, and many are therefore made use of for this purpose. Portions of them are taken, doubled over, and then covered with numerous coatings of wood-oil and a paste composed of this same thi'-see, with finely sifted burnt rice-husks, saw-dust, and rice-water, until at last they become

firm as a piece of cardboard, but vastly more pliant. Then the sheets are emblazoned, and the text painted on, the whole being enclosed between richly illuminated teak boards. Few more splendid looking manuscripts can be seen anywhere. Occasionally copies are found engrossed on thin sheets of ivory or copper, but those on the royal pasohs, called Woolla Kammawahsahs are most highly esteemed. The text is always read in a peculiar way, in a high-pitched, jerky recitative, which is not without a certain impressive effect.

The following detailed account of the ceremony of initiation is taken from the second volume of Bishop Bigandet's *Life of Gautama*, the bulk of it being a translation of the Kammawahsah:—

As soon as the pyin-sin have taken their places, the Kammawah sayah (the secretary), introduces the novitiant duly clothed and bearing the necessary utensils. The candidate kneels down, and, with his hands raised to his forehead and his body bent, repeats three times:

"Venerable president, I acknowledge you to be my oopit-see."

The assistant addressing himself to the candidate, says:

"Dost thou acknowledge this to be thy father, and these thy sacred vestments?"

The candidate audibly answers, "Yes," and then withdraws to a distance of twelve cubits from the assembled fathers, whom the Kammawah-sayah addresses as follows:

"Venerable oopit-see, and you, brethren, here assembled, listen to my words. The candidate who now stands in a humble posture before you solicits from the oopit-see the favour of being honoured with the dignity of pyin-sin. If it appears to you that everything is properly arranged and disposed for this purpose, I will duly admonish him."

Then turning to the candidate he says:

"Oh, candidate, be attentive to my words, and beware lest on this solemn occasion thou utterest an untruth, or concealest aught from our knowledge. Learn that there are certain incapacities and defects which render a person unfit for admission into our order. Moreover, when before the assembly thou art interrogated respecting such defects, thou art to answer truly and declare what incapacities thou mayest labour under. Now this is not the time to remain silent and decline thy head; every member of the assembly has a right to interrogate thee at his pleasure, and it is thy bounden duty to return an answer to all his questions.

"Candidate! Art thou affected with leprosy or any such odious malady? Hast thou scrofula or any similar complaint? Dost thou suffer from asthma or cough? Art thou affected with those complaints which arise from a corrupted blood? Art thou afflicted by madness or other ills caused by giants, witches, or the evil spirits of the forests or mountains?"

To each question the candidate answers—

"From such complaints and bodily disorders I am free."

The examination continues:

"Art thou a man?

"I am.

"Art thou a true and legitimate son?

"I am.

"Art thou involved in debts?

"I am not.

"Art thou the bondman and underling of some great man?

"I am not.

"Have thy parents given their consent to thy ordination?

"They have.

"Hast thou reached the age of twenty years?

"I have.

"Are thy vestments and sacred begging-bowl prepared?

"They are.

"Candidate, what is thy name?

"Wago (a vile and unworthy being).

"What is the name of thy master?

"His name is oopit-see."

The assistant then turns to the assembled yahans and says:

"Venerable oopit-see, and ye assembled brethren, be pleased to listen to my words. I have duly admonished this candidate who seeks from you admission to our order. Does the present moment appear to you a meet and a fit one for his admission? If so, I will order him to approach."

The fathers remaining silent, the assistant instructs the postulant to go close to the assembly and to ask that he may be received. The candidate approaches the assembly, and sitting before them in a respectful attitude, resting on his heels, raises his joined hands and says three times, "I beg, oh fathers of this assembly, to be admitted as yahan. Have pity on me, take me from my present state of a layman, which is one of sin and imperfection, advance me to that of yahan which is one of virtue and perfection."

The assistant then addresses the council and says:

"Oh ye fathers here assembled, hear my words. This candidate, humbly prostrated before you, begs of the oopit-see to be admitted among us; he is free from all defects, corporeal infirmities, and mental incapacities that would otherwise debar him from entering our holy state; he is provided with the patta and holy vestments, and he

has duly asked the assembly in the name of the oopit-see for permission to be admitted. Now, therefore, let the assembled fathers complete his ordination. To whomsoever this seems good let him keep silence; whosoever thinks otherwise, let him declare that the candidate is unworthy of admission."

This he repeats thrice, and then continues:

"Since then none of the fathers object, but all are silent, which is a sign that all have consented, so therefore let it be done. Let this candidate pass out of the state of sin and imperfection into the perfect state of a yahan, and thus, by the consent of the oopit-see and all the fathers, let him be received."

The fathers must note down under what shade, on what day, at what hour, and in what season the candidate has been received.

The reader of the Kammawah, addressing the candidate, continues:

"Let the candidate attend to the following account of the duties which are incumbent upon him, and to the faults which he must carefully avoid:—

"It is the duty of each member of our brotherhood to beg for his food with labour and with the exertion of the muscles of his feet, and through the whole course of his life he must gain his subsistence by the labour of his feet (he must not work with his hands, nor beg with his tongue). He is allowed to make use of all things that are offered to him in particular, or to the society in general, that are usually presented in banquets, that are sent by letter, and that are given on the new and full moon and at festivals. Oh, candidate, all these things you may use for your food."

—*Candidate.* "Sir, I understand what you tell me.

"It is a part of the duty of a member of our society to

wear, through humility, yellow clothes made of rags thrown about in the streets or among the tombs. If however, by his talent and virtue, one procures for himself many benefactors, he may receive from them for his habit the following articles, namely, cotton and silk, or cloth of red (of a Thibetan origin) or yellow wool."

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform.

"Every member of the society must dwell in a house built under the shade of lofty trees. But if, owing to your zeal and virtue, you procure for yourself many benefactors who are willing to build for you a better habitation, you may dwell in it. The dwelling may be made of bamboo, wood, or bricks, with roofs adorned with spires of pyramidal or triangular form."

Candidate. "I will duly attend to these instructions.

"It is incumbent upon an elect to use as medicine the urine of a cow or of a black bullock, whereon lime and the juice of a lemon or other sour fruit has been poured. He may also use as medicines articles thrown out of markets, or picked up at the corners of streets. He may accept for medicinal purposes nutmegs or cloves. The following articles also may be used medicinally—butter, cream, and honey."

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform."

The newly initiated yahan is now warned against the four sins, the commission of any one of which would entail the loss of the dignity he has just attained.

The Kammawah-sayah goes on: "Elect, being now admitted into our society, it is no longer lawful for you to indulge in carnal pleasures, whether with yourself or with animals. He who is guilty of such a sin can no longer be numbered among the perfect. Sooner shall the severed head be joined again to the neck, and life restored to the breathless body, than a pyin-sin who has committed

fornication recover his lost sanctity. Beware therefore lest you pollute yourself with such a crime."

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform.

"Again, it is unlawful and forbidden for an elect to take things that belong to another, or even to covet them, although their value should not exceed a quarter of a tical (about six annas). Whoever sins even to that small amount is thereby deprived of his sacred character, and can no more be restored to his pristine state than the branch cut from the tree can retain its luxuriant foliage and put forth buds. Beware of theft during the whole of your mortal journey."

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform.

"Again, an elect can never knowingly deprive any living being of life, or wish the death of any one, however troublesome he may prove. Sooner shall the cleft rock reunite so as to make a whole, than he who kills any being be re-admitted into the society. Cautiously avoid so heinous a crime."

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform.

"Again, no member of our brotherhood can ever arrogate to himself extraordinary gifts or supernatural perfections, or through vain glory give himself out as a holy man; such, for instance, as to withdraw into solitary places, or on pretence of enjoying ecstasies like the areeya, afterwards presume to teach others the way to uncommon spiritual attainments. Sooner the lofty palm-tree that has been cut down can become green again, than an elect guilty of such pride be restored to his holy station. Take care that you do not give way to such an excess."

Candidate. "As I am instructed so will I perform."

(The pyin-sin who commits any one of these last four sins is *ipso facto* excluded from the society. Nothing can palliate them. Other sins may be atoned for by penance

and repentance, but one who has committed any one of these crimes may indeed, if undetected, remain a member of the order, but inwardly he no longer belongs to it. He has become a living lie.)

These denunciations end the ceremony. The newly made yahan falls in with the rest, and on the rising of the council proceeds, in company with them, to his own monastery. It is thus clearly seen that the mendicant receives no spiritual powers whatever. He simply becomes a member of a holy society that he himself may observe the laws of the Master more perfectly. He has nothing to do with guiding his fellow monks or the laity. The latter indeed may gain for themselves easy merit by pressing alms upon him, but that can hardly be said to be a merit in the pyin-sin. They may also go and consult him, and he will read portions of the Law, and explain them as far as his learning permits. He occasionally reads the Law aloud in a rest-house near the pagoda on a feast day; goes to a funeral, that the pious may have an opportunity of giving him presents, and so laying up a good store towards the kan of a future existence. But it is the teaching of the youth of the country that is his chief credit, and it is this that binds the country to the support of the monastic system.

Sometimes after the ritual of the Kammawah has been gone through, the sponsor of the elected pyin-sin stands up and reads a selection from the full rule of the order, which contains 227 precepts. This is called the Pateemouk, or Book of the Enfranchisement, and its composition is attributed to the Lord Buddha himself; but it is much more probably, indeed certainly, like the Kammawahsah, the slow growth and production of a long series of observant apostles. Every possible action of the pyin-sin during

the day is anticipated, and the precise way in which it should be performed carefully set forth. The sins he may commit are divided under seven main heads, of which the first, called Pahrahzeekan, comprises the four cardinal sins mentioned above. The others may be atoned for by confession to the kyoung-pohgoh or sayah, who appoints a penance or not as he thinks fit. The punishments are not severe in character, and are usually to water the sacred trees, to sweep out the rooms, to walk for a stated time in the heat of the sun, to carry a number of baskets of earth from one place to another, to sleep without a pillow, or to keep a vigil by night in a churchyard. But a series of infractions of the law would meet with very severe treatment, if not from the heads of the monastery, then from the mass of the people outside. If a pyin-sin committed any one of the four cardinal sins, he would most assuredly be unfrocked and turned out of the monastery doors to the mercy of the people, and they would certainly stone him, and, in Upper Burma, probably put him to death. Such lapses, and even the commission of more venial offences, are very rare, for the weak-minded yahan is always free to turn layman whenever he chooses, without consulting any one but himself and his frailties.

The ceremony of excommunication, thabeht hmouk (literally, inverting the alms-bowl), is sufficiently solemn. The monks gather in a circle round the culprit, and the latter part of the Kammawah, that which is read to drive sickness and evil spirits out of a town, is gravely recited by the abbot, the surrounding brethren responding at the end of each sentence. When it is finished, his yellow robes are taken off him, his alms-bowl is turned mouth downwards, and he is hurried out of the monastery limits. His condition is pitiable. No one may speak to him; no monk will take alms from him; he can neither buy nor

sell; he is not allowed even to draw water from a well, or drink from the jars at a wayside zayat. He is as much an outcast as any pagoda slave, and grievous is the penance he must go through before he is once more received into the society even of laymen. It occasionally happens that when there is much evil living in a district, or if the people are lax in their religious observances, that the brethren of the kyoung put the neighbourhood under a ban by inverting their alms-bowls, and refusing to go out begging. There is no greater proof of the power of the assembly than the rapidity with which this effects its purpose. The most careless are brought to a sense of their sinfulness in a few days.

Before the death of the Lord Buddha, the yahans all addressed one another as awoothaw; but after he had attained the neh'ban of khan-das under the eng-gyin bin (*Shorea robusta*), a recognition of relative rank was instituted. The inferiors, we are told, called the more advanced in the order, banteh, while the juniors were addressed in their turn, by their proper name, or that of their family. In Burma, however, this regulation prevails only to a very slight extent. With the mendicants, as with the royal family, and indeed with the populace at large, it is considered uncivil to mention a person's name in conversation, and his rank, or the kyoung he belongs to, is used instead, or perhaps only the designation of his sacred profession. The laity indiscriminately address all wearers of the yellow robe as payah (lord).

Similarly the "punishment of Brahma," recommended by the great master to be employed against weaker brethren, is little used. This punishment was calculated to isolate the offending brother. The other yahans were to avoid speaking to him, to the extent of not even uttering a rebuke, if he indulged in indiscreet talk. Nowadays,

when one pyin-sin is irritated with another, he does not indeed talk to him, or go and abuse him, but he advises the people to have nothing to do with him, and give him no alms.

Indeed many laxities have crept in. Some casuists evade the rule against touching gold and silver. It is becoming lamentably common for monks, otherwise eminently pious and worthy of respect, not only not to refuse money, but actually to receive it with their own hands—covered with a handkerchief. Such unprincipled playing with the letter of the law is vehemently denounced by the Soola-gandees, and disliked by the more earnest laymen, even when the pyin-sin does not personally shave so close to the wind, but bids one of his schoolboys take the coin and put it in the box. Of a piece with this is the round-about way of getting anything the monk may especially desire. He may not directly ask for anything, if it were even food to save him from starvation, far less must he bargain for the object he wishes. Therefore an elaborate method of exchange has been invented by a yahan in whom the passion of covetousness was far from being extinguished. He says, such and such a thing "is useless to me; but what is the value of that? I have begging-bowls, iron, clay, and lacquer in abundance, but my robe is sadly worn and discoloured. That thengan is seemly and suitable for a holy man. Thrice blessed is he that giveth alms, his merit will wax great." Very often he thus gets the thing he wants without having to part with previous alms' gifts. Others perhaps, a little more scrupulous, mention to the kappeeyadayaka, the manciple of the kyoung, that they would be glad to have such and such a thing, and he provides it out of the monastic funds. All this trifling with the spirit of the pateemouk is however strenuously denounced by the Soola-gandee,

who in Lower Burma have gathered a large proportion of the more right-thinking of the laity to their side.

Some of the regulations of the Book of the Enfranchisement are very singular, but all may be traced to some one of the fundamental precepts, and are not so ludicrous as some unbelievers would make out, except for the fact that they are set down so precisely when they might have been left to the imagination.

A monk must not build a monastery for himself without the aid of a benefactor. If his piety and talents are not such as to induce a layman to build a kyoung for him, let him patiently remain in the house into which he was ordained. He must see that the foundations of a monastery are not laid in a place where there are many insects or worms, which would thus be killed.

For a similar reason he must not dig himself, except in a sandy place, where there can be no animal life. Neither must he spit, nor do anything of that kind on green grass, nor in fresh water, nor is he allowed to climb trees. There was a discussion in the Lord Buddha's time as to whether vegetation could be regarded as anywhere in the ladder of existence. Shin Gautama, on being asked, said they could not. Still trees and grass cannot be destroyed, for they support life in other creatures. A yahan may not drive in a carriage or ride a pony. He must not travel in the same boat, or remain under the same roof with a woman, or even with a female animal. When he walks abroad he must neither walk fast nor dawdle and lounge about the streets. He must allow no woman to wash or clean his robes, nor eat food cooked by female hands, if he can get any other; if a woman offers rice in her hand, he may take but not eat it. He must not look into a brother's thabeht, as suggesting that he does not receive much alms. He must not eat his food to the last mouthful, and must

avoid highly-seasoned dishes as tending to heat the blood.

In return for their self-denial the pyin-sin are bountifully honoured by the people, from the sovereign on the throne, who vacates his seat for the thah-thana being, to the beggar in the street who prostrates himself in the dust when the yahan passes by. In Upper Burma all make obeisance when the mendicant passes, and the women kneel down on each side of the road. In Lower Burma such outward marks of respect are not usual in the larger towns, but there is no lack of veneration, and all make way for him when he walks abroad. The oldest layman assumes the title of disciple to the last inducted pyin-sin, and, with clasped hands, addresses him as payah, the highest title the language affords. The monk's commonest actions, walking, eating, sleeping, are referred to in honorific language, different from that which would be used of a layman, or even of the king, performing the same thing. The highest officials bow down before them, and impose upon themselves the greatest sacrifices, both of time and money, to build splendid kyoungs for them, and minister to their wants. Finally, the monk's person is sacred and inviolable. Nothing he does can subject him to the civil law. He bears the title of Thageewin Mintha, Thageewin Prince, as the heir of the scion of Kapilawoot, and receiver of his inheritance.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MONASTERIES.

OUTSIDE every village in Burma, no matter how small, there stands a pohn-gyee kyoung. There may have been no one wealthy enough, or zealous enough, to build a pagoda, or the proximity of some ancient and eminently famous shrine may have rendered unnecessary a general subscription for such a purpose, but there is always a building for the mendicants. Away from the noise of the people—for the monastery must not have secular houses near it—surrounded by great, well-foliaged trees, tamarinds, mangoes, jacks, cocoa-nut, and areca, and palmyra palms, sahl trees, and the tha-byay-bin, to shield them from the heat and supply them with fruit, the monks' position is well calculated to attract those who are tired of the tumult and bickerings and sorrows of the world. There the pyin-sin pass their time without a care to ruffle the tranquil current of their lives; without trouble as to their food, for a pious and kindly population supplies them far beyond their wants; with no irksome duties, for nothing is required of them in return; with no care but how to get through the day with as little trouble and ennui as possible; seeking nothing but the fulfilment of the Law, and the path to eventual deliverance from the misery of ever-recurring existences; no wonder many

novices come to like the ways of the religious house and yearly swell the ranks of the order, so that there are no signs, two thousand five hundred years after the founding of the religion, of any weakening of its strength.

The first behkkoos dwelt under the shade of the forest trees, or perhaps in small huts erected there to shelter them from the pitiless sun and the raging of the storms. This is the explanation of the circumstance that every Budh is specially connected with some tree, as Shin Gautama with the bawdee-bin, the banyan, under which he attained his full dignity, and the eng-gyinbin, the *Shorea robusta*, under which he was born and died, and, as we are told, the last Budh of this world cycle, Areema-dehya, will receive his Buddhaship under the *Mesua ferrea*. Hence the regard for trees which the Burmans share with so many other nations, ancient and modern, and the fact that a clump of palmyras and tamarinds seen in the distance infallibly suggests a monastery. It is not to be supposed however that it was the intention of the Lord Buddha that the sacred order should remain far away from mankind in lonesome huts in the depths of the forest. Very early in his teaching, kings, nobles, and wealthy men vied with one another in erecting spacious and magnificent dwellings for himself and his disciples. Most noted among these were the Zaytawoon Monastery, built by the rich man Anahtabehn, within which the celebrated Mingala Thoht sermon was preached by the Buddha to a pious minded dewah; the Pohppayohn Kyoung and that of Wehloowoon built by the wealthy dame Weethaka and King Bimbathara of Radzagio, to both of which Shin Gautama frequently retired to spend the rainy season of Lent. These were all magnificently adorned; and it is expressly mentioned that the pious need spare themselves no expense in constructing and adorning such religious

buildings, though the inhabitant of the most gorgeous of them dresses in no way different from the humblest anchorite, and has no more costly utensils.

Ordinarily the monastery is built of teak, though in many places, both in Mandalay and Lower Burma, brick buildings are being erected, notwithstanding the prejudice that exists against them from their greater liability to damage in the case of earthquakes. The shape is always oblong, and the inhabited portion is raised on posts or pillars, some eight or ten feet above the ground. They are, like all the other houses in the country, never more than one story high, for if it is an indignity to a layman to have any one over his head, it is much more so to a member of the brotherhood. The space between the ground and the floor of the kyoung is always kept open and is never used except by the school boys, who have not arrived at notions of personal dignity, and find the locality retired and convenient for games at gohn-nyin-toh, and the discussion of forbidden eatables, or subjects of conversation. There are always a few pariah dogs there too, dozing off the surfeit of food they have had from the morning begging pots, or the offerings at the pagoda. A flight of steps of stone or wood leads up to the verandah, which extends all along the north and south sides, and frequently all round the building. If the steps are of stone, or rather brickwork covered with plaster, they are usually adorned at the foot by propylæa in the shape of two beeloos, or a couple of manoht-theeha—curious creatures, half man half lion—usually bold enough in conception if somewhat rough in execution. Tiers of trefoil heads usually characterise the parapets when they are of mason work. When the ladder is of wood it is covered with spirited carving in deep relief, representing nats and ogres, dancing figures and grim warriors, with

abundant scroll work as everywhere else throughout the building.

From the raised floor thus reached, rises the building, with tier upon tier of dark massive roofs, giving the appearance of many stories when there is actually but one, for the reason already mentioned. This style of roofing is allowed only for religious buildings, for the royal palaces, and for the houses of a few high officials who acquire the honour by special patent, and with whom the form and number of roofs is a matter of regulation settled by the sumptuary laws. This spire-like style of roof is called pyathat, and properly there are but three kinds; with three super-imposed roofs, called yahma, with five roofs called thooba, and with seven, as the royal palace and the most sacred kyoungs, called thooyahma. The ends of the gables are adorned with pinnacles or finials, each with a curious wooden flag at the top and crowned with a htee, gilt and furnished with bells, copper, silver, or gold, the whole being elaborately carved.[1]

The kyoung accommodation is very simple. It consists in the main of a great central hall divided into two portions, one level with the verandah where the scholars are taught, and most of the duties of the monastery carried on, and the other a raised daïs, two feet or so above the level of the rest of the building. Seated upon this the yahans are accustomed to receive visitors, and at the back,

[1] The triple, quintuple, and septuple roofs of the monastic houses, with their elaborate adornments, there is little doubt found their origin in the opportunity which wood gave for the development of ornament in the way of carving. If the wooden monasteries are compared with the strikingly similar wooden churches in Norway—at Hitterdal, for example, or Borgund—we have a proof that nature, under like circumstances, always produces like results from human ingenuity. It may be added that the simple tumulus, which was the original idea of the bell-pagoda, is also found in the Scandinavian *haug*.

against the wall, are arranged the images of Buddha, a large one usually standing in the centre on a kind of altar with candles, flowers, praying flags, and other offerings placed before it, and on shelves alongside a number of smaller figures of gold, silver, alabaster, clay or wood, according to the popularity of the kyoung and the faith of the neighbourhood. Close by are placed also the manuscript chests, sadeiks, small shrines, models in wood of monasteries and pagodas, the fans and other religious implements of the pyin-sin and the gifts of the pious, heaped together ordinarily in very careless fashion. The central image is almost invariably placed on the eastern side of the building. There are occasionally dormitories for the monks, but as a rule they sleep in the central hall, where the mats which form their beds may be seen rolled up round the pillow against the wall. In many monasteries there is a special room for the palm-leaf scribes, often detached from the main building, as are the cook-room and the bathing-houses.

The whole area of the extensive compound in which the monastery stands is enclosed by a heavy teak fence with massive squared posts and rails, seven or eight feet high. All within this parawoon is sacred ground, and the laity, when they enter, take off their shoes and carry them in their hands. This rule applies to the highest in the land, and when a prince or a min-gyee arrives on his elephant, he must dismount at the monastery gate, and come in reverently barefooted. Within the one encircling fence there may be, and usually are, quite a number of separate buildings like that described, with their ecclesiastical roofs towering up, dark, or glittering with gold leaf among the bright green foliage of the peepul and tamarind trees. Each house has a prior or superior, with his two or three brethren, and a certain number of probationers and scholars, and in the central building dwells the geing-

ohk, or sadaw. In a corner of the compound, or just outside, there is almost always a thehn, a building for the performance of various rites and ceremonies, more particularly for the examination and ordination of yahans. The ground on which these stand is not only holy now, but has always been so since the Lord Buddha first preached the Law. When a new thehn is to be built, it is usually found possible to exhume the remains of an old building of the same kind, thus proving the immemorial sanctity of the site. Otherwise the ground is dedicated to religion by the king in perpetuity.' This consecration of the ground is, however, rare in these latter times, though several times, in Lower Burma, the British Government has been asked to make a formal grant of land, to be used for religious purposes. Not far from Rangoon, in the neighbourhood of the Kyeik-ka-san pagoda, there is a thehn-gyee, regarded as particularly holy, from the tradition that it is built over the remains of one of the yahanda, who brought the remains of Shin Gautama to Rangoon. Within the monastery precincts are usually, also, one or two tasoungs, highly ornamented tectums, erected over an image of the Buddha. Very many zealous priors put up marble stones, or finger posts, at certain points beyond the Parawoon, with inscriptions on them to the effect that Oo Adehsa's, or Pyinyazawta's monastery is to the westward, or southward, and you must not kill animals, or conduct yourself in an unseemly manner near it. It is the ignoring or the ignorance of this injunction which has brought many sporting Englishmen into trouble, and led them to believe that the yahans condemn shooting altogether, and lay themselves out to thwart it; whereas the intention is only to avoid witnessing, if possible, what they regard as a flagrant sin, and especially to protect the pigeons, which usually flock about the

monastic trees. Not many people in England would think of going to shoot in a churchyard.

The majority of kyoungs in the jungle and in Lower Burma are plain teak wood, or brick and lime structures, with more or less ornate carving and moulding, and interior decorations; but to see the really gorgeous ecclesiastical buildings one must journey to Mandalay. There the Kyoung-daw-gyee, the Royal Monastery, is the most striking collection of edifices of their kind to be seen in the world. At the foot of Mandalay Hill, just outside the eastern gate of the city, it extends over an area of a good many acres. Every building in it is magnificent; every inch carved with the ingenuity of a Chinese toy; the whole ablaze with gold leaf and a mosaic of fragments of looking-glass, embedded in a resinous gum, while the zinc roofs glisten like silver in the sun, and the golden bells on the gable spires tinkle melodiously with every breeze. The huge posts are gilt all over, or covered with a red lacquer; the eaves and gables represent all kinds of fantastic and grotesque figures. The interior is no less elaborate, the panels of wall and ceiling are some carved, some diapered with the mosaic mirror work, glistening like silver with a rough gold network thrown over it. The wood carving is particularly fine; the effect in some places, where the birds, pecking, taking wing, alighting, and in every other variety of attitude, are so cut as to appear to underlie the profuse flower scroll work, being particularly clever. The amount of gilding, spread thickly over every part of the kyoung, alone represents many hundred pounds. Singular from its plain unadorned appearance is the high, brown teak-wood tower in one corner, to which the Sadaw-gyee and his monks occasionally withdraw, to devote themselves to contemplation and the task of learning to know themselves and the khandas,

as well as the Seht and the Sehdathit. For this withdrawal from their gorgeous surroundings, to indulge in abstract thought, they have the example and precept of the Lord Buddha himself, who, even when he reposed as a babe on the bosom of his aunt Gautamee, gave himself over to contemplation.

The whole of the flat land between Mandalay Hill and the city walls is covered with monasteries, each of them standing separate and enclosed within its own parawoon, and almost all presided over by a sadaw, a monk of the highest rank. They are thus entirely independent of each other. One of the most interesting for Englishmen is the Theehoh Teik, the "Ceylon Monastery," presided over by Lingayahmah, a sadaw who was in great favour with Mindohn Min, the late king. The term teik is always applied to a "bishop's monastery," as implying that his is the chief of a number of kyoungs, all under his care, and in which he makes occasional sojourns. The Theehoh Teik is peculiar for its trim appearance. It is very new; the under part of all the buildings is of brick; the compound is kept scrupulously clean; there is not a single large tree in it, and the parawoon is a neat sawn wood fence, instead of being, as is the case almost everywhere else, composed simply of huge stems of trees placed side by side in the ground. The sadaw himself is a very enlightened man. He has been several times to Rangoon to worship at the Great Pagoda, and to decide on questions in dispute. He has, in his library, copies of the English Scriptures in the Burmese version of Judson, and has read them through. Numbers of American Baptists' tracts, and the sacred books of other religions, have also a place in his manuscript chests. These are all deposited in a separate building standing in the middle of the enclosure, and used for no other purpose, except that the scribes sit

here making copies of borrowed MSS., or setting down notes of the learned bishop himself. The palm-leaf book is still universal, and the work of making up a volume is therefore very laborious, for the most practised manipulator cannot, with his agate style and light strip of palmyra leaf, exceed the speed of an English boy who has just got over the preliminary difficulties of pot-hooks and hangers. The letters scratched on are made more distinct by the application of crude earth-oil. This serves to darken the writing, as well as to preserve the leaf. The regular scribes are always laymen, and it is a matter of very considerable unpleasantness to the cenobites, that the cleverest of them are very often uncommonly bad livers, spending all their gains in libations of "Old Tom," or little balls of opium. These vagaries are, however, frequently winked at, for a copyist who can write neatly and with accuracy is far from being common.

The Theehoh Teik library is a model in its way. It is nearly the best monastic collection in Mandalay, and is certainly far better arranged than any other. The sadeiks, or manuscript boxes, are arranged in three rows, one over the other; the thohts and zahts—the sermons and birth-stories—of the Lord Buddha below; above them the Cinghalese commentaries and exegeses; and on the top shelf Burmese translations and the explanations of various learned sadaws. Each chest contains a large number of different books, each separate collection of leaves being enclosed between wooden boards, some plain, some carved in high relief, with figures of dewas and demons. Round this is wrapped a kabalway, a square piece of cloth with inwoven scenes from the sacred books, or portions of the Law, and the formulæ used at the pagoda. Most of these are of silk, very often with narrow slips of bamboo worked in so as to give stiffness to the whole. Instead of this, or

sometimes in addition, is used, the sah-see-gyoh, a riband, about two fingers' breadth, and upwards of a yard in length. This is knitted or crocheted in a peculiarly close fashion, which puzzles English ladies, and which I am not milliner enough to be able to describe. On it is worked the name of the owner, his titles and distinctions, and whatever other aspirations he chooses to add. They are very neat, and quite easy to read, an advantage which does not always characterise Berlin wool work. The king's grants of forest land, monopolies, and the like, are usually executed in this way.

All the boxes are kept carefully locked, and the door is barred at night, for such a library represents years of labour, and could only with the greatest difficulty be replaced. It is only in Mandalay that libraries of any value are to be found. In Lower Burma the majority of the kyoungs do not even possess a complete copy of the three parts of the Beetaghat, the Buddhist Bible, and some few have nothing beyond a copy of the Kammawah-sah, and perhaps a Malla Lingaya Woottoo, a life of the Lord Buddha, or something of the kind. Many others have, no doubt, valuable collections, but the monks are ignorant, they cannot read the books themselves, and they do not care to exhibit them to those who can. Consequently, they moulder away in the bottom of the sadeik, crushed away into the darkest corner of the main room of the monastery. It is, perhaps, not surprising that the most learned monks do not belong to the large towns, but come from remote kyoungs in the depths of the jungle. This is true also of Upper Burma, for though the sadaws in Mandalay are the most learned in the country, they have acquired their reputation in jungle monasteries, and have only been summoned to the royal city when their fame has spread over the land, and the title of royal teacher has been conferred on them.

The main room of Lingayahmah's Monastery contains a great number of curiosities collected by the Burmese Embassies on their travels through Europe. Most of these were presented by the Kin Woon-gyee, the head of the mission, and are in many ways most interesting. Prominent is a large photograph album, emblazoned with the Italian royal arms and containing a fine collection of views. Another album is filled with cartes of members of the Embassy, notably of the lamented Naingan-gyaw Woon-douk, the portly and good-natured "Pio Nono" of the *Daily News*, who seems never to have missed being photographed wherever he went, and figures in every style, from the penny smudge, apparently taken on a country race-course or outside Battersea Park, to the coloured and gilt grandeur of a Neapolitan cabinet. The author of the "Encyclopædia of Burmese Literature" had no notion of changing the expression of his face, however. He looks stolidly like just having had his dinner in every impression, and the multiplication of photographs serves principally as a means of comparing different styles of art, and exhibiting the great stock of clothing which the worthy Woon-douk carried about with him.

In addition to the photographs, there is a great collection of engravings, some of them very valuable; and mixed up with these are to be found some very queer items—old hotel bills, advertisements of gigantic hosiery establishments, with pictures of the same at the top, circus play-bills, shilling view guides, some sheets of the *Graphic*, the front page of the wrapper of *Punch*, and a few railway tickets. These are all carefully preserved, along with many other gifts of the home-keeping pious; rolls of yellow cloth, Dutch clocks, betel-nut boxes, spare spittoons, and begging-pots, rugs, and pots of honey. The images of the kyoung, contrary to the usual custom, are placed in a

glass case in the centre of the room, instead of at the east end. This situation is due to their value, most of them being of silver or gold, and one or two studded with precious stones.

The Theehoh Teik is certainly one of the neatest and most methodically arranged communities in the country, but there are many more gorgeously decorated, and still more that are larger. The biggest in Burma was probably the Mahah Yatana Poung-daw, which stood near the great Arrakan Pagoda in the suburbs of Mandalay, and was in great part burnt down in 1879. The building, with its encircling platform, measured 440 feet by 200, and was supported by 404 massive teak trees, none less than two feet in diameter, and the central ones, which upheld the topmost tier of roof, must have been quite eighty feet in height. Near Maulmein, in Lower Burma, there is another kyoung remarkable for the huge girth of its posts.

The brick monasteries are commonest in the neighbourhood of the present and old capitals. They are covered with chunam, and in place of having a spire, are themselves built in the form of a pya-that, rising in the shape of rectangular terraces to a considerable height. Round the central hall, which is often divided by a gilt railing across the centre, are a number of cloisters and corridors, which ensure a perpetual cool breeze. Many of these monasteries are adorned with fresco paintings in the hall and in the honeycomb of corridors, representing usually scenes from the Zahts, passages in the life of Shin Gautama, an especially favourite one being the Jataka of Naymee, where the pious prince is represented as a white ghostly figure in a chariot, passing, like the the *pius Æneas*, through the dismal abodes of hell and the six heavens of the nats. Some other representations portray the occupations of daily life, such as feasting, hunting, weaving, and the

different nationalities to be seen in the country. A very common scene shows the punishment which awaits fishermen in the next existence. The miserable destroyer of animal life is represented as dangling by the tongue on a fish-hook, while demons jerk him into the air, and drop him back into a lake of burning pitch. Many of them have inscriptions below to explain the subject of the picture. Thus in Pagahn :—

"When King Nay-bin Min-gyee reigned in Maytheela over the ten governors, according to the old books, the Tha-gyah Min came from the nat heavens to help him."

"In the monastery Yatana Shway-deing, our Lord preached the Pataynohn Tagayoh, and remained several days."

"Shin Thoomayda (Gautama), in the land of Thoodawdana, received the Buddhaship under the banyan tree."

"Payah Aloung Theidat (the embryo Budh, Prince Siddartha), the King's son, married 4,000 charming Yathay-mya."

"Our Lord rides on the elephant Nana Geeree."

And so on in great variety. One also often finds such a notice as this scrawled on the wall: "In order to be prepared and to gain happiness in the seats of men, of nats, and of neh'ban, the rice-pots are set in order, the images are erected, and the paintings on the walls painted."

The monasteries are built, supported, and furnished by the pious, but there are not a few of them that have considerable sums of money laid away, usually under the control of the kappeeya-dayaka, the layman who lives in the kyoung, and provides for the wants of its inmates. A number of the royal fields round about Oungbinlay, where the Burmese army assembles to seek victory before entering on a campaign, are set apart for the use of the Royal monastery at Payah Gyee, and the revenues are

kept in a huge money-chest, which is always under the care of a guard of soldiers. Much of the money is devoted to the adornment of the adjacent pagoda. None can be spent on embellishing the monastery itself. That would be as great a sin as if a monk should build one for himself, besides that it would be depriving the populace of much opportunity for gaining merit.

There are a few monasteries of the Pohnnas here and there in the large towns throughout the country. These Brahmin priests were originally brought captives from Munnipur, and have been employed as astrologers ever since, their ranks being occasionally recruited by new arrivals. One of the requests preferred to Colonel Symes on his embassy to Ava in 1796 was that he would persuade the Governor-General to send a learned Brahmin and his wife to the capital. The race has been maintained tolerably pure, and the Pohnna is readily distinguishable in the streets from the pohn-gyee. The astrologers muster naturally in greatest force in Mandalay, and their monastery there is situated in a magnificent grove of trees south of the town, and close to the cemeteries. Unlike the native religious, they do not raise their houses on posts above the ground, but follow the Indian custom of having the mat-covered earth for their floor. Foreigners are not admitted into their temples, but there is no objection to the images being brought out by a Pohnna for exhibition to his friends. They worship Krishna and twenty-five other deities, but have all but no congregation, few of their faith coming to Mandalay, and those laymen who were carried away at the same time as themselves into captivity having turned to the Buddhist faith.

No yahan is allowed to have a separate monastery built for him until he has spent five full Wahs under the disci-

pline of a prior. These Lents must also be consecutive. According to their seniority in this respect the monks obtain names. Thus a pyin-sin who has spent five years —which of course is implied by the Wah—is called Anootee, and is a fit object for the pious to honour by erecting a special kyoung for him. When he has been ten years in the order he is addressed as Myizza-tee, and those who have remained steadfastly for twenty years, attain to the full honour of Mahah-tee. Such a self-denying man is always sure of a magnificent funeral when he dies.

It is a very good point about the life in the monastery that the great austerities and absurd mortifications of the flesh indulged in by the Brahminical houses find no place with the Buddhists, who reject them as unnecessary and unprofitable. The life of the initiated is one of constant self-denial; all superfluities and luxuries are renounced; all that is calculated to excite the passions is forbidden; but there are no revolting self-inflicted penances such as are regarded as meritorious in themselves by the followers of the Hindu creed. Fasts and penitential deeds are indeed recommended to those living in the world, but that is because such methods are the best means for weakening the passions, and increasing the power of the spirit as against the flesh. They are not a part of perfection They are not even on the direct way to the attainment of perfection. That is only to be achieved by meditation, by pondering on the various aspects of the substances and truths in the world. Therefore the pyin-sin do not make any difference, except in the case of the very austere, in the observance of the appointed duty days, during which it is incumbent on the laity to abstain from food up till midday. After noontide the yahan never eats. Considerable scandal is sometimes caused by the tricks of sundry of the weaker vessels. They sit all day with their

back to the sun, and if in the afternoon they feel hungry, they ask a scholar if it is yet noon. The wily kyoung-thah, thinking to escape a thrashing on the morrow, promptly answers that it is a good way off twelve o'clock yet, and brings wherewithal to solace the hungry religious. The falsehood, or *suppressio veri*, on the part of the scholar is a venial offence at his age, and the yahan escapes sin, for if he breaks the law it is because he was deceived. Again, Englishmen are often puzzled to know, in a country where there are no clocks, how it is that the people know what o'clock it is. The matter is simple enough when the sun is to be seen, for its course is pretty nearly the same all the year round, and the Burman is tolerably skilled in guessing the time from its height or from the length of the shadows thrown. But it is different during the rainy season, when the sun is often not to be seen for weeks at a time. Here, however, so say the yahans, whom it most seriously concerns, a singular dispensation of nature steps in to their aid. The cocks and hens of Buddhist countries are not as the tame villatic fowl of Western lands. I do not refer to their powers of flying, which are sufficiently irritating to hungry, life-taking voyagers, but to the fact that the cocks crow at stated hours, four times a day—at sunrise, noon, sundown, and midnight. They thus inform the inmates of the kyoung when they must cease eating for the day, and enable them to obey the provisions of the Pateemouk. This useful acquirement of the Buddhist chanticleer was acquired in a singular way. Sundry books of the Baydin were burnt as containing unlawful cabalistic teachings. Among these was the A-thet-manah Baydin. When the fire had died out the barn-door flock came and pecked at the ashes, and so assimilated the astronomic lore contained in the book. I never had the opportunity of watching any particular cock

to see if he actually did as reported. They fly about so, that for purposes of observation they might just as well be jungle fowl.

Thus even the powers of nature conspire for the well-being of the monks. It has been shown how the laity provide them with food and splendid dwellings. It may be unhesitatingly asserted that the most luscious fruits and the most delicate viands all find their way to the monasteries. A single instance will show to what an extent this is carried. In jungle places, where in the dry season there is often a great dearth of water, one spring is always set apart for the kyoung, because it would be a great sin, as well as being unpleasant for the yahan, to drink water which had been stirred up, and for that reason would be more likely to contain animal life. This reservation often compels the entire village to walk a mile or more for a supply of water, a very serious inconvenience to the easy-going Burman. In order that strangers and passers-by may have no excuse for drinking from the monastic well, a yellow cloth is hung over it from a bush or a post erected for the purpose. Here again a stumbling block and stone of offence is thrown in the way of the ignorant or unreflecting foreigner.

Everything near the monastery is rendered sacred, not merely when it is enclosed in the parawoon, but as far as the prior may choose to proclaim it. This is especially common in the case of the large tanks or bricked reservoirs which the pious dig in many parts of the country. These are frequently well stocked with fish and turtle, and when the monks declare them sacred, the fish often become wonderfully tame from the abundant food that is brought them by yahans solicitous as to their safety. A regular thing after worship in the Arrakan Pagoda at Mandalay is to go and feed the great turtle in the tank at the back

of the cloisters. There are rows of women selling balls of cooked rice, cakes, and other delicacies which the pious buy for the consumption of the sacred reptiles. There was great consternation when in March, 1879, the tank dried up and many of the huge creatures died before the people could get water enough from the river, brought in chatties and household utensils, to save them from such a sad fate. The circumstance was supposed to be a sign from the nat guardians of the place of their abhorrence and anger at the shedding of the royal blood by King Theebaw in his holocaust of February. But taking further and totally innocent life seemed a rather singular fashion of expressing disapprobation.

The dog-fish of the Theehadaw Monastery, situated on a small island in the middle of the third and lowest defile of the Irrawaddy are particularly celebrated, and having been referred to by every traveller in Burma, the little kyoung with its stone pagoda (one of the few of that material in the country) has become a regular show-place for all passengers to Bhamaw. The great five-feet long, gape-mouthed creatures seem to know their bounds, and do not wander farther than half a mile or so from their sanctuary.

But this is far from being such a remarkable case as previous writers have seemed to imply. All monastic tanks have fish more or less tame according to the good nature and sympathies of the cenobites, and there is, or was, at least one other place on the Irrawaddy where the fish were as domestic as the dog-fish of Theehadaw. This was near the Kyeik-lat pagoda and monastery, on one of the numerous mouths of the great river. I knew the place well years ago, and then there used to be great conflicts between the ill-conditioned, impious fishermen and the monks. The fish were of the species called nga-dan, well known on English breakfast-tables under the name of

"butter-fish," and to provide for the unscrupulous appetites of the foreigner, people used to come at night to catch the unsuspecting nga-dan. The yahans had taught the fish to come and be fed when they beat on the bank and cried Tit, tit, tit; and it was easy to bring them up at any time by following this method. The fishermen came about midnight, and stamped on the bank, and when the nga-dan came, promptly whisked them out with a landing net. The scholars and novitiants had to take turn at watching for these marauders, and if any were discovered, the abbot with his entire *posse comitatus* sallied out to the rescue of his finny *protégés*. If the impious life-taker was alone, or if the abbot's was the stronger party, the offenders were incontinently thrashed, and the young ko-yins wielded their cudgels with an energy and knowledge of tender spots which ordinarily made the victim give up his vile practices for the future. If, however, the law-breakers were in force, then the abbot adopted less violent tactics—though it would have gone hard with any hardened sinner who might have ventured to strike a pyin-sin. He simply sat down and preached the Law to them, recited the Ten Precepts, enumerated the horrors of hell, and thus soon choked them off for that occasion at any rate. But the presence and example of the English, and more especially their money, has a very bad effect on weak-minded, unprincipled men. In Upper Burma such a contest between wrong-doers and the upholders of the first of the Five Precepts could never have been prolonged—Theehadaw, where such scandals never occur, is indeed an instance of it; and since the country side would not rise to the aid of the pyin-sin, they had to adopt other measures to save their friends and enjoy peaceful nights. They persuaded a pious supporter to dig a large tank near the river-bank and to connect it by a narrow ditch with the river. Then

they devoted the results of a whole morning's begging to enticing the nga-dan into the tank, beating first at the mouth of their canal and then all along the banks of it, till they had got all safe in the tank, which abutted on the enclosure of the kyoung. But alas! this was done in the rainy season, and when the hot weather came round the water got shallow and warm, and the fish sickened and died; and in order to preserve at least some of them, the survivors had to be taken back to the river again. When I last was at Kyeik-lat, there were still a good number of the tame fish, tame enough to allow you to stroke them and put gold leaf on their heads, but there were far from being as many as there should have been had the villagers duly observed the teachings of the Buddha. The primeval simplicity of the people is fast fading away in Lower Burma. The travelling Englishman finds no difficulty in either getting people to sell fowls, or others still less hampered by doubts, to wring their necks and cook them.

The monastery sometimes has a name of its own; more frequently it is called by the Pali name of the town or pagoda near which it lies, or by that of its prior. The Thayet-daw Kyoung in Rangoon is so called from the magnificent mango-trees that grow within it. Well known in Upper Burma is the monastery of Oo Sandinah, or the Mingala-san Teik, where the late king received his instruction in the religious texts which he knew so well. The name is usually given by the founder after consultation with the proposed head of the community, and it cannot be said that the consultation results in much originality.

Here and there throughout the country there are a few yatheht, hermits who withdraw into solitude in forests and desert places, and, like the old rathee (from which word of course the Burman term is derived), living on

wild fruits and roots and the chance alms of passers by. But as the rathee were closely connected with the Brahmins, and as the custom is not recommended by the Buddha, nor looked upon with favour by the people, it is not of frequent occurrence. Occasionally a very austere monk buries himself in the solitude of the jungle during the season of Lent, in order the better to devote himself to meditation, but even this is not common. Nevertheless in the rocks above Nyoung Oo, near Pagahn, there are a few cells dug out high up in the cliffs which are always occupied, as any one who has gone out to shoot the rock pigeons which abound there will very speedily find. The yatheht comes down, confiscates the bag, and drives away the sportsman with terrible threats of future punishment. Such caves and holes in the rocks are not uncommon on other parts of the Irrawaddy, wherever the ascetic is able to climb up and finds the stratum soft enough to hack out with his axe and hollow with his finger-nails. There are a few such cells cut in the rocks at the back of Mandalay Hill, and visitors to the sacred spot occasionally come across one of the hermits striding along, wrapped in thought, grasping an iron staff hung with rings, the rattle of which warns the people to get out of the way and not disturb the holy man's meditations. A few go away from human society altogether, just as St. Simon Stylites isolated himself on a pillar, and the old Culdee monks from the north of England and Scotland wandered off to the snowy wastes of Iceland, there to seek repose and relief from the turmoil of the world.[1]

Mandalay Hill is always occupied, for the spot is particularly sacred. The late king used to send thither daily

[1] It is said that the Thaddah, the grammar, was added to the Beetaghat, that the hermits who had withdrawn to the jungle might not destroy the power of the sermons and lauds by mispronunciation.

a hundred fowls which had been bought and saved from death, and the pious gave them plenty to eat. Similar proceedings caused the sneer of Purchas, "For men they hadde not an hospitall that were thus hospitall to fowles;" but this is hardly deserved, at any rate not in Burma. There in every monastery the Kappeeya-dayaka has a stock of money, raised by selling the things given in presents to the monks, which he devotes to giving in charity to the well-deserving sick and to poor travellers, while any one is welcome at all times to shelter and food in the kyoung as long as he conducts himself properly. The yatheht may be looked upon with pious awe for his austerities and mortifications of the flesh, but the ordinary pyin-sin is more favourably regarded. The building of monasteries and the giving of presents to their inmates is a constant strain on the generosity of the people. It is far more difficult to keep the balance of merit on the right side in Burma than in other countries. Almsgiving is a constant and imperative expense, in addition to regular and personal worship at the pagoda. In Thibet wind or water drives the prayer-machines for extinguishing sin, and the goodman acquires merit while he is snoring at night with his wife at his back. In Pekin the practical Chinese are able to calculate exactly what is set down to their credit, by the expedient of having the prayer-wheels turned when necessary by oxen. But nothing of this kind is practicable in Burma. You must pay your devotions in person, and unless you supplement these by almsgiving your prospects towards a next existence are not such as your friends can regard otherwise than with concern. Fortunately the more holy the receiver the greater the merit of the alms. To support one hundred ordinary men is not so much as to feed one yahan, and so on in increasing ratio. The merit of giving one single meal to a

Buddha outweighs that of supplying ten million Pyitzega Buddhas with food. Thus the kyoungs are always well furnished, and their advantage in affording education to the children further gives them a hold over the country. It will be long before the number of monasteries decreases in Burma.

CHAPTER XIV.

SCHISMATICS.

THE Buddhist religion is to its adherents the full and entire truth, and has remained almost entirely free from the schisms and dissensions which have sprung up in most other religions, especially in those of Europe, where the progress of science has caused the rise of multitudes of sects. Fully bound by their religion, in the complete sense of the word, are only the worshipper of the fetish whose object of adoration hangs up in his house, or dangles about his neck, and the Buddhist, whose teachers and models of faith rise and fall in flesh and blood before his eyes, vanishing to neh'ban, there to be freed from all earthly concern, but leaving behind them as a guide to the same last resting-place the sacred World-Law, and at the same time the Assembly of the Perfect, who appear as an incarnation of that Law for the building up of piety among the laity. The yahans have already beaten down the adversaries within them, and, clothed with the yellow robe of transfiguration, exhibit in their persons the glorious results of adherence to the tayah. Thus the reverence paid to the monks is a kind of spiritual hero-worship in the sense in which Carlyle speaks of it.

The man, yet a slave in the bondage of his lusts and passions, gazes in admiration on these models, to whom the

recognition of earthly vanity gives strength enough to reject all the allurements of the world and to live only for the future. The spirits are always present to the fetish-worshipper, for hideous devils scare him away from every natural object. So the great secret of the existence of the world is ever present to the Buddhist, and while in the political and social life of the European nations the manifold character of the questions of the day attract and occupy the minds and influence the religious beliefs of the people, the eyes of the Burman Buddhist are uninterruptedly fixed on the dark mysteries which surround his beginning, his end, and every moment of his existence. His religion enters into every action of his life, and its admirable system of morality need fear comparison with none other on earth; while everything else appears but as a matter of detail, or a different method of viewing the same things. He is not at all unwilling to enter into discussion as to what is the true religion, whether only one is the right, whether all have sprung from the same root and have only now assumed different forms, or whether, as the Deity gave to the hand different fingers, so He has given to mankind different paths. But the arguments of the proselytiser have but very little success, while, on the other hand, there is nowadays practically no attempt to gain converts to their own national faith. This is no doubt in great part due to the absence of all ministerial duties in the brethren of the yellow robe, but also to a belief that true faith can only grow up gradually, and cannot be forced on the mind. At the same time there is not a hint of bigotry. In Mandalay all forms of religion are allowed to be carried on without the least semblance of opposition. The solemn voice of the muezzin; the tinkling of the convent-bell, under the cross of Rome; the noisy rites of devil and fire-worshippers; even the

ceremonies of the former fierce enemies of Buddhism, the Brahmins—all of these are exercised without the least hindrance, and the processions of the various forms of faith pass one another in the street with the most complete amicability. Even a convert is left unharmed. There may be a sense of wonder and contempt for the man who voluntarily resigns his high hopes as a Buddhist for the probable fallacies of another cult, but there is never any real attempt at oppression.

Heresies therefore never originate with the people; any there are come from the monasteries, but even these relate more to matters of discipline and internal regulation than to real points of faith. The yahans are very clever in dispute, and are far from being averse to it. The better educated of them know their ground perfectly well, and are quite able to take full advantage of the strong points of their position. They rely entirely on the holy books, and these they have at their fingers' ends. It is granted by all that they are, almost without exception, entirely free from intolerance, and are quite unable to comprehend the zeal for conversion. A venerable sadaw in Bhamo came and listened attentively to the Burmese sermon of Dr. Mason, the celebrated American missionary. When it was over he came and complimented him on its depth and grasp, and then suggested that the reverend doctor should go with him to offer up worship before the image of Buddha! The monks do not think, with cynical mockery, that every one should be allowed to go his own way and be blessed after his own fashion; on the contrary, they seek zealously for new truths and explanations of mysteries; but they hold it presumptuous and unwarrantable, in view of the dark secrets which envelop the life of man from its dawning to its close, to set up each his individual opinion with dogmatic certainty as

the only true form and the only one that can save. But they take their stand-point on the actual state of things, on the misery and sorrow which is eternally bound up with the nature of the human body as it exists. They devote themselves entirely to preparing the spirit for its delivery, when it will finally rest, raised above every fear of new change in the harmonious equipoise of neh'ban. For this last and highest aim no hypotheses have to be assumed. They require no personal deity who would demand a special place in the system of the world, and in a possible danger to the cosmic system might incur the same risk of destruction. They remain entirely within the clearly defined horizon of their limit of vision, and are therefore very difficult to attack in argument.

Nevertheless schisms have arisen from time to time, and exist at the present day, but they have sprung more from revolt against excessive austerity, or corresponding laxity, than from any real difference on doctrinal points. The Lord Buddha had hardly died before one of the most aged of the disciples, Soobhadra, thus addressed the assembled brethren: "Revered ones, cease to mourn. We are now happily released from the rule of the great Sramana; we shall no more be tormented with 'this is allowable' and 'that is not allowable;' we can now do what we wish, and leave undone what we do not care for." To put an end to this scandal to religion, and fix definitely the bonds of morality, the great disciple, Kathapa, called together, forty-five years after the Buddha's death, in the year 543 B.C., the first great Council, at Raja Greeha, in the country of Magadha. Kathapa himself was president. The Weenee was read by Oopalee, whom Shin Gautama himself had pointed out as the most learned of his followers, and the Dharma by Ananda, the personal attendant and favourite disciple of the Budh. During seven months

the various points in dispute were considered from all points, and after rulings had been publicly and authoritatively given, the Council broke up. Thus were the three "baskets of the Law" first settled.

But the backsliders were not corrected, and they gradually increased in number, until, one hundred years later, it was found necessary to call together another synod. There was now a considerable body of schismatics, and they formulated a demand for definite relaxations from the severity of the laws. The Council was again held in the country of Magadha (the modern Oudh), this time in the town of Waythalee. The king, Kalathawka, built a splendid hall, and when all was ready, himself placed the ivory fan on the ledge of the pulpit, and sent a message to the members of the Thenga who had assembled for the conference, saying, "Lords, my task is finished." The relaxations demanded were then discussed. The most important were as follows:—Food might be taken until the shade of the sun was two inches in length; whereas Shin Gautama had directed that for the curbing of the flesh none should be eaten after noontide.

Whey might be drunk after midday; forbidden as being a component part of milk, and therefore approaching animal food.

Taree, or palm toddy, might be taken, because it looks like water. This was a particularly bold demand, seeing that all fermented liquors are forbidden, and that in modern days the same plea might be urged on behalf of gin.

Gold and silver might be accepted as alms; the use of them being strictly prohibited.

A junior may lawfully copy a senior even in what is wrong; whereas no example could be any valid excuse for a wrong act.

Subsequent permission may cover an act; whereas the Weenee required prior permission.

The restriction against indulgences to be in force only in the monasteries; and not for those who might be sojourning in villages.

These points, after lengthy discussion, were all given against the dissenters, and degradation was awarded them as a punishment.

Still matters got worse, and in 241 B.C., the great king Athawka, of Patalipootra, brought about the third and last great Council to cleanse the Church. After nine months, public reading of the Book of Rules and of the most excellent Law, 60,000 heretics were expelled from the Church, and it was resolved to propagate the religion far and wide. This last decision was fraught with the most momentous consequences to Burma, for among the missionaries sent north, south, east, and west from Behar were the two, Thawna and Ohttara, who proceeded to the country of Suvarna Bhoomee, the "Golden Land," and landing at Tha-htohn, now north of Maulmein, but then on the sea-coast, proceeded to disseminate the Buddhist doctrines amongst the tribes in the great river-valleys of the country. It is important to notice that the doctrines they brought with them had just been revised and confirmed by a great Council of the Church. Since then, throughout all Burma, the old geniolatry has been displaced by the teachings of the Buddha. The regulations introduced then in their first purity have been retained ever since practically unchanged, so that at the present time Buddhism exists in Burma in a form much nearer to that which Shin Gautama taught than is found in any country where the Three Precious Things are held in reverence.

The only sect which has at any time started any

doctrinal heresy is that of the Paramats. They reject the worship before pagodas and images, and pray only to the Nyan-daw, the godlike wisdom, which abides like a mountain of fire in the heavens, invisible to mortal eyes, and taking no interest and exercising no influence over mundane things. These dissenters pay reverence to the ordinary brethren of the yellow robe, keep the Ten Precepts, repeat the Bahwanah (Payah, Tayah, Thenga, &c.) and the Eetteepee-thaw, but they never go near the shrines, and recite their prayers and invocations in the jungle or in open fields. It is a kind of reminiscence of fire-worship, an ancestral adoration of the heavens in the sun, caused possibly by a shrinking from the suspicion of idolatry. A cardinal fault in them is that they give no alms, for most religions are at one on the question that charity covers a multitude of sins. The sect was founded at the beginning of this century by a Pohngyee, called by his followers Shin Taboung. He lived at Sin-byoo-gyoon, "White Elephant Island," a place half-way between Mandalay and the British frontier, and the dissent would probably never have spread beyond that district, or outlived the life of its originator, had it not been for the king Bodaw Payah. When the Thenga refused to recognise his claim to be the fifth Buddha of this world cycle, he espoused the cause of the Paramats, imposed penalties on all monks who would not accept their tenets, and went so far as to force a Thah-thana-being, one of the heads of the Order, to marry, marriage being permissible under the doctrines of the dissenters. This gave the schism a prominence which it could not otherwise have attained, and enabled it to last down to the present time, though its numbers, never very great, have steadily dwindled away. There are perhaps more Paramats in Prome than in any other town of Burma, British or Independent. Their most

prominent doctrine is that the Shway Nyan-daw existed before the world began and will exist for all eternity. Ideas may arise from the influence of exterior objects, but when they have been freed from their connection with bodily creations, they have an independent existence, and when once they have come into being continue to live. This is explained by the assertion that the quasi-deity of the Buddha is founded only on his supreme wisdom. Buddha means, etymologically, "the wise," and Shin Gautama was simply an incarnation of the pure Wisdom. Men believed they actually saw him when he was already really a deity—nothing else than the inspiring Nyan-daw, which made the five Khandas appear to have an actual earthly existence. Occasionally an energetic Sadaw excommunicates all the Paramats under his jurisdiction, and forbids all the laity to sell to them, or have any communication whatever with them, but as a rule they are let alone. The movement is too feeble to threaten any real danger to religion, and has never gained many adherents among the laity.

It is a different matter with the rival parties of the Mahah-gandee and the Soola-gandee. Here there are no heretical doctrines in dispute; it is simply a question of greater adherence to the strict rule of the Order. Instead of, as in the early days of the Assembly, one party crying out against the too great austerity of the majority, it is a sturdy protest of a minority within the Church against the lamentable weakness and laxity of the great body of the Order in the observance of the precepts of the Book of the Enfranchisement. The quarrel is at present limited to Lower Burma, where the greater wealth of the country and the introduction of foreign luxuries among the laity have led to corresponding indulgences in many of the monasteries, against which the Soola-gandees protest and

preach with feverish energy. The austere party is strongest in Maulmein, Henzadah, and Pegu, and faction feeling runs so high that street fights between the scholars of the two sects are very common, and often so embittered that the English authorities have to interfere to restore peace in the town, for the laity take sides with equally bitter animosity.

The questions in dispute are entirely matters of discipline. The Puritan party, as the Soola-gandee may very well be called, denounce the habit, which is becoming very frequent, of wearing silk robes. The Kammawah sets forth that the thengan should be stitched together of rags picked up in the streets or in the graveyards, and such panthagoo thengans the Soola-gandees wear and glory in. The Mahah-gandees, on the other hand, have been gradually becoming more and more luxurious. At first new cloth was torn into irregular pieces, and then sewn together. Latterly it has been considered sufficient to tear a corner and stitch it up again, or perhaps only to rip a portion of a seam, and from this to the wearing of silk garments was no very great step. The Puritan party declare that this is simply a scandalous playing with the letter of the law. Again, the Soola-gandees eat out of the alms bowl as it comes in from the morning round, whereas the Mahah-gandees empty out the thabeht into plates and make as palatable a meal as possible from their collections, which on the face of it, is a pandering to fleshly weakness. Others, much more bold in their backsliding, do not hesitate to have a special meal cooked for them every morning by the Kyoung-thah-gyee, and sit down to it smoking hot, after their morning's perambulation, while the begging-bowl is handed over to poor people staying in the monastery, or emptied out for the benefit of the dogs and crows. No sophistry, one would think, could

explain away this Sybaritism, but the Mahah-gandees have the assurance to try to make a merit of it, saying that the money expended by the Kappeeya-dayaka on the materials for the breakfast is the proceeds of the sale of previous offerings of the pious—rugs, blankets, lamps and so on—and by thus making use of it, not only do the people gain merit for their gifts of food, but the monks themselves are enabled to extend their charity to the poor or the birds of the air. That is a severe straining of the command that the Areeya should live by alms.

Similarly when the Mahah-gandee goes abroad he wears sandals on his feet, and protects his shaven crown from the rays of the sun with an umbrella. The austere brother walks the streets barefooted and bareheaded, even though his head may ache and his feet be blistered with the shimmering heat of high noon. Only when he is on a long journey does the Soola-gandee allow himself such superfluities as sandals or umbrella. The Mahah-gandee will receive coin in his own hands, covered by a handkerchief; the Soola-gandee will not take it even through the instrumentality of a pupil, or off a ngway-pa-daytha, a rupee-hung tree, at Tawadehnthà feast time. Pwès on feast days, or even in the neighbourhood of the pagodas, are denounced by the reforming party; so are balloons with fireworks in them; the habit many monks have fallen into of going to visit Englishmen, with no other object than curiosity; and above all the noisy saturnalia in the monasteries at the end of Lent which have become so common in Rangoon. It will thus be seen that the great point at issue is the maintenance of the original humble character of the brotherhood. The different vernacular presses of Rangoon flood the country with controversial tracts written by both parties, and the laity adopt sides and carry polemical discussions into private life. So fierce had the

quarrel become, that in 1880 one of the most learned and venerated of the Mandalay heads of the Church, the Think-kazah Sadaw, came down to settle the question. He was received everywhere with extraordinary honours. At Donoo-byoò, the whole of the populace lined the path up to the monastery prepared for him, and kneeling down they threw their hair across the way, so that from the river bank to the steps of the Kyoung, he walked all the way on a carpet of human tresses. But he did not settle which party was in the right. After making abundant inquiries and hearing the most prominent advocates on either side, he halted at Henzadah and announced that he was about to give his decision. Unfortunately it came to his ears that in that town, as well as in several others, the Areeya had been betting freely as to which way he would give his judgment. Thereupon the Sadaw grew furious, denounced both parties alike, and refused to say anything which would countenance the claims of either sect. He remained for a considerable time in the low country, giving numerous addresses for the building up of religion, but never on any occasion throwing out a hint as to which way he leaned, further than that both parties should give way a little and refrain from exhibiting such scandalous dissensions before the heretics. The warfare was calmed for a space, but the old fierce denunciations have broken out again. The opposing abbots bid their lay supporters refrain from giving alms to the rival sect. They recommend all the penalties of excommunication without having the power to go through the formal ceremony. But though the Mahah-gandees have the greater number of followers, the self-denying Soola-gandees have all the more earnest and rightly thinking men on their side and will probably prevail in the end, though a new great synod may have to be held

before that is effected. The head of the reforming party is Oo Ohkgansa, a learned Sadaw, whose monastery is at O'hpo in the Tharrawadi district. He was recently invited to go up to Mandalay to assume the control of a Kyoung and spend the rest of his days there. The Burmese Government offered to send down a royal steamer with high dignitaries to escort him to the capital, but the sturdy old "Bishop" refused to forsake his party until he should be persuaded that its principles would gain the victory in the end. And so no doubt they will, for not even the most casual observer can fail to see that they, in their bare ascetic monasteries, are far nearer to the ideal of the founder than the Mahah-gandees with all the appliances of their richly stocked Kyoungs.

CHAPTER XV.

PAGODAS.

SOME one with a greater regard for alliteration than the truth once said that the principal productions of Burma were pagodas, pohn-gyees, and pariah dogs. This is neat, but inaccurate, like a good many neat things. Nevertheless it is marvellous how many pagodas there are in the country, far exceeding the number of those raised in the sacred island of Ceylon, or by the Tibetans and Chinese, pious Buddhists, though they have fallen into sad doctrinal heresies. A Burman does not notice the multitude of the religious edifices in his country till he leaves it and finds how far more sparing other nations are in their places of worship. No village so poor but what it has its neatly kept shrine, with the remains of others mouldering away round about it. No hill so steep and rocky, or so covered with jungle, as to prevent the glittering gold or snow-white spire rising up to guard the place from ghouls and sprites, and remind the surrounding people of the Saviour Lord, the teacher of Nirvana and the Law. There is good reason for this multiplication of fanes. No work of merit is so richly paid as the building of a pagoda. The Payahtagah is regarded as a saint on earth, and when he dies he obtains the last release; for him there are no more deaths.

The man who sets up a row of water-pots on a dusty road does well; he who raises a ta-gohn-deing, or sacred post, who builds a rest-house, presents an image or a bell, or founds a monastery, gains much koothoh and ensures a happy transincorporation when he passes away; but the Payah-tagah is finally freed from the three calamities, his kan is complete, the merits outweigh the demerits, and he attains the holy rest. Little wonder then that, with such a glorious reward in store for him, the pious man hoards his wealth for such an object, and that pagodas are so plentiful in the land. It avails little to repair a previous dedication, unless it be one of the great world shrines at Rangoon, Pegu, Prome, or Mandalay. In the case of ordinary pagodas the merit of the repair goes almost entirely to the original founder. Hence that puzzle to Europeans, the building of a bright new place of worship close to one which a very little care would save from crumbling away into a simple tumulus.

The word pagoda is undoubtedly a kind of verbal *hysteron proteron* for the Cinghalese dhagoba, derived from the Sanskrit dhatu garba, a relic shrine, and is properly applied only to a monument raised over some of the remains of the Lord Buddha. Such are dat-daw, pieces of Shin Gautama's flesh; an-daw, his teeth; san-daw, his hair; thin-gyat-daw, the frontal bone; hnyat-yoh-daw, the jaw-bone, besides others. In addition to these there are the sacred utensils and other articles used by the teacher of the Law, such as the thengan, the yellow robe; the thabeht, or alms bowl; the toung-way-daw, his staff; the padee, or rosary, and other things of the same kind. These holy relics however could not go far, even if they had been equitably divided between the great countries professing Buddhism, which they certainly were not. Burma alone claims more personal remains than could possibly have

existed. The same thing is, I believe, true of Popish relics in Europe, where pieces of the true cross are as abundant as portions of the dress of the founder of Buddhism are in Burma. It is useless attempting to prove or disprove the authenticity of particular relics. To admit of the multiplication of shrines, models of the sacred things are permitted, and these only, in metal, precious stones or clay, are deposited under the vast majority of pagodas. But images and sacred books are also so enshrined, and thus arises the classification of the four kinds of shrines, the Zaydee lay-ba.

1. Dahtoo zaydee, erected over relics of the Buddha, or models of these;

2. Pareebawga zaydee, over the sacred eight utensils, or their imitations;

3. Ooddehtha zaydee, enclosing images;

4. Damma zaydee, enclosing the sacred books, such as the *Beetaghat Thohn Bohn*, the three baskets of the Law, and other sacred volumes, like the *Bagawah*, appointed to be read during Lent.

It may be well to remark that the word "pagoda" is not known at all in Burmese, either in its English or Cinghalese form. Such a building is called a Zaydee, from the Pali chaitya, meaning the offering place, or place of prayer, but the expression Payah, applicable as well to the image as to the shrine, is most frequently used in reference to the more famous centres of worship.

The greatest of the payahs, such as the Shway Dagohn in Rangoon, the most famous of all; the Shway Maw-daw, the lotos-shrine of Pegu; the Shway San-daw, the depository of the sacred hair at Prome; and the Mahah Myat Moonee, the temple of the most exalted saint in Mandalay; all these were founded by single individuals, or brothers to whom the most excellent Master had given hairs from his

head to deposit in the specified place. How the exact spot was found, and how successive kings increased the size of the first erection, and donations flowed in from the pious in all parts of the world to beautify and preserve the building, all these particulars are recorded in the palm-leaf records of the various temples. Many later Zaydee, however, have been erected by villages, or by public subscription in whole districts, as pious memorials, or to commemorate some particular event, as well as for the obvious purposes of public convenience on the duty-days of the month. Very many, and among them some of the most beautiful, are, on the other hand, the outcome of purely individual desire for merit. Some, such as the chaste, white Seebyo shrine at Mengohn, near Mandalay, are built in remembrance of individuals; the graceful pagoda mentioned being erected by a recent monarch in memory of a favourite queen. Under all, however, to render them sacred, are buried some of the holy things. Without these, no htee, or umbrella, could be placed on the summit of the spire.

These objects are deposited in the tapanah teik, a square chamber, built in the basement of every payah, and always the first thing finished. Not only one, but many things are thus enclosed. Captain Cox, who saw the first beginnings of the huge Mengohn pagoda, describes the tapanah teik of that vast mountain of brickwork. It measured sixty-one and a-half feet square, and was eleven feet deep. The interior was plastered white and gaily painted, and was divided into a number of compartments of various sizes to receive the offerings of the king and the courtiers, the innermost naturally containing the most sacred. The dedicated treasures themselves were very numerous, including a great variety of miniature pagodas and monasteries in silver and gold of varying degrees of purity;

images of the same materials and of polished alabaster some of them four feet high; a number of gold caskets, probably containing models of the sacred teeth and bones; besides these, there was a miscellaneous collection of other things—slabs of coloured glass, precious stones, white jars, such as are used by the royal family, and finally a soda-water machine, then almost as much a novelty in England as in Burma. The offerings did not strike Captain Cox as being very valuable, but the then king, Bodaw Payah, cared a good deal more for his own special glory than for the raising of religion. Not long afterwards he claimed to be a new Buddha, and because the Sacred Order would not recognise his right to the title, turned heretic, and victimised the monks with renegade zeal.

The relic chamber at the great Shway Maw-daw offers a very decided contrast. The Buddha gave two hairs of his head to two brothers, with instructions to enshrine them on the Thoo-da-thana hill. An earthquake revealed the exact spot to them, and a host of byammahs and nat-dewahs came down to take part in the depositing of the relics. A chamber, ten cubits square, was prepared, and at the bottom was laid a slab of pearly white marble, set with diamonds. A similar slab, studded with emeralds, formed the lid. The Tha-gyah king placed a golden cradle in the centre of the bottom slab, and round this were arranged images of the chief disciples of Shin Gautama, each holding a golden bouquet. The jewelled casket containing the hairs was placed on the cradle, and high festival was held for many days. Numbers of other images of the Buddha himself, and of many eminent disciples, were placed round the sides of the tapanah teik, and countless offerings were made, the Tha-gyah king giving ten billions of gold, each of his queens forty thousand of silver; the father of the two brethren one

thousand of gold, and many others equally great sums. But this was in the brave days of old.

Still even nowadays very costly offerings are often deposited in the relic chamber. An almost invariable gift is a representation in gold of the Lord Buddha, with the hooded snake raising itself over him, as in the images of Vishnu in India, or a great model of the great Master as he received the supreme wisdom under the bawdee-bin. Examples of the last may be seen in the South Kensington Museum, as also of the Saboopatee payah, representing him with the tower-like royal crown, the wings on legs and arms, and other emblems recalling the king's son who went out to dedicate himself as the Buddha and the conqueror of Mahn-nat. Open-handed piety is quite as frequent as of yore, only the chroniclers of modern days have not the florid imaginations of their predecessors.

The dedication of a payah is a high festival, but there is no prescribed ritual in the sacred books, and each individual pohn-gyee, after reciting the precepts and the eettee peethaw, has a form of his own, embracing portions of the law and the sacred discourses. A prominent function in the service, as indeed always in giving alms, is the yay-set-chah, the pouring out of water drop by drop on the ground. The great king Bimbathahra did it himself from a gold cup when he presented the Wayloowoon or Bamboo-grove monastery, and so likewise it is recorded of the rich man Anahtabehn. The idea is to share the merit of the action with all creatures, and at the same time to call to witness, besides the mathohndayay nats, all gods and men, that the donor may have due reward for his piety. The same thing is frequently done in order to legally hand over a gift. As the water falls drop by drop on the ground, the pohn-gyees read out the formulæ, the substance of which is as follows: "Firm in my belief in the three

precious things, the Lord, the Law, and the Assembly, I make this offering that I may be freed from all present and future miseries. May all creatures suffering torment in the four states of punishment reach the happy seats of nat-dewahs. May all my relatives, friends, and all men inhabiting this earth and the ten thousand worlds, share in the benefits of this meritorious work. O earth, and ye spirits, guardians of this place, bear me witness to the piety of this gift."

It is worthy of note that it is explicitly stated that the inward dispositions of the giver have nothing to do with the merit resulting from a good work. The merits are strictly proportioned to the degree of sanctity or perfection of him who receives the alms. Hence the glorious release which awaits an otherwise bad man who erects a pagoda.

Zaydees are of many shapes and degrees of elaboration, but one common idea may be traced through them all. If you ask a Burman monk the cause of the variations in the form of the payah, he will tell you that the Buddha left no instructions regarding them in the holy books, but had only said that a small mound should be raised over his bones in the form of a heap of rice. Apart from the relation in which the payah stands to the Buddha himself as the representation of the holy one sunk in meditation, the ostensible object is the preservation of relics, and these are to be laid in a shrine, like the lotos-bud of which the zaydee is typical, and later by an extending of the lines got the form of a bell or spire. In the Malla Lingaya Woottoo we are told that the infant Buddha in the womb of Queen Maia resembled a lotos-bud, or a beautiful pagoda, and the conjunction of this idea with the simple original tumulus has undoubtedly led to the typical form as now seen in Burma. The names for various parts of the building all recall the idea of the flower-bud, with its

young leaves folded in adoration. Thus the rounded swelling just below the slender spire is called the hnget-pyaw-boo, the banana palm-bud, and on the extreme summit at the top of the htee is the sehn-boo, the diamond-bud, which in not a few poor districts is represented by a soda-water bottle, which combines the resemblance to a flower bud with the good offices of a lightning conductor. The hnget-pyaw-boo is usually surrounded with lavish adornment of the sacred lotos. The payahs that rise up into a plain cone or spire are therefore the nearest to the original tumulus, the top being simply drawn out into a conical point. On the other hand, the bell-like pagodas are only a direct imitation of the lotos-bud, and this has led to the more rounded dome-like forms, sometimes called thabeht hmouk, the inverted begging-pot. This term, however, is applied to the swelling out round part on every pagoda, and has thence been borrowed to designate special shrines. It has nothing to do with phallic worship as some have imagined, nor is there any idea of the resemblance to a human skull. Such grim reminders of mortality common in Thibetan Buddhism do not commend themselves to the Burman.

The buildings are all made of crumbling, sun-dried brick, for it is enough to gratify the pious feeling of the moment, and even the long years that the most solidly built stone edifices might last would only be as an evanescent drop in the stream of eternity. Thus the Burman sees no harm in building pagodas of sand, or even cloth and pasteboard, and in the national annals the victory which false shrines won over more substantial erections is a favourite theme. In Lower Burma, the payahs are all of the simplest pattern, derived from the archetypal rice-heap and the lotos-bud. They are all solid pyramidal cones, rising with a gradually diminishing rounded outline, and surmounted by a htee, or "umbrella" spire, a

construction resembling the musical instrument called a *chapeau chinois*, formed of concentric rings, lessening to a rod with a small vane called hnget-ma-nah on the top. They are almost without exception erected on more or less elevated platforms. Burma is quite different from other Buddhist countries, where the relics are exhibited on great feast days. The payah is perfectly solid with the exception of the tapanah teik, situated directly under the spire and the htee, and there is no means of entering this to view the sacred relics. The addition of spires and the elaboration of the central pyramid are later thoughts, and give hints of the great architectural efforts to be seen in Upper Burma. The peaks of Mount Myemmoh are said to have furnished the first notion. In some cases, as at the Shway Sandaw of Prome, the central spire is surrounded at its base by a circle of small gilded temples or zaydeeyan, forming a continuous wall round the pagoda, each containing an image of the Buddha, and suggesting the idea of the Setyawala hills round the world-girding Thamohddaya sea. In almost all the larger payahs there are arched wings on each face of the lower platform, serving as it were as ante-chapels, and each containing a large Gautama. It is obvious how easily the introduction of these niche chapels led to the halls and aisles of the Pagahn temples. Still this elaboration remains only a sign of architectural genius, and not of greater sanctity, for in every case the building itself serves only as a meet place for meditation and praise in thought or words. The great temples of Pagahn, with their galleries, transepts and corridors, have more of the character of churches in the ordinary acceptation of the word, and the Ananda above all, with its echoing vaults and dim religious light, reminds one especially of some great cathedral of the Middle Ages. But the outward magnificence of the Pagahn temples does

not win for them the reverence which is shown to vastly plainer bell pagodas.

Of all the shrines, the Shway Dagohn Payah, the great pagoda of Rangoon and the most venerable place of worship in all the Indo-Chinese countries, is the finest and the most universally visited. Its peculiar sanctity is due to the fact that it is the only payah, known to Buddhists, which contains actual relics, not only of Shin Gautama, but of the three Budhs who preceded him in this world. In the Tapanah Teik of the pagoda, along with eight hairs from the head of the Buddha in the elevènth andrakap of whose cycle we are now living, there exist the yay-thouk-palah, the drinking-cup of Kaukkathan; the thengan or robe of Gawnagohng; and the toungway or staff of Kathapah. Little wonder then that the glittering gold spire on the last spur of the Pegu hills attracts at the time of the annual festival in March, pilgrims, not only from the farthest parts of Burma, but from Cambodia, Siam, and Corea. The stately pile stands upon a mound partly natural, partly artificial, which has been cut into two rectangular terraces, one above the other, each side, as is the case with all pagodas, facing one of the cardinal points of the compass. The upper terrace, which has been carefully levelled and paved and repaved by the pious, rises 166 feet from the level of the ground, and is 900 feet long by 685 wide according to English measurement. The ascent was by four flights of brick steps, one opposite the centre of each face, but the western approach has been closed by the fortifications built by the English conqueror to dominate the town and secure the pagoda, where there was so much desperate fighting in the Burmese wars. Ordinarily with other pagodas, the eastern flight is the most holy and therefore the most cared for; but the town of Rangoon lies to the south, and consequently this ascent is the grandest.

At the foot are two gigantic leogryphs, built of brick, covered with plaster, and gaily painted. From them up to the platform the soung-dan, the long stairs are covered by a rising series of handsomely-carved teak roofs, supported on huge wood and masonry pillars. The heavy crossbeams and the panelling are in many places embellished with frescoes, representing scenes in the life of the Great Master and his disciples, and with hideously curious representations of the tortures of the wicked in the fiery chambers of hell. The steps themselves are exceedingly primitive and dilapidated. They have been manufactured piece by piece, apparently by ardent seekers after merit. Here and there they are made of broad stone flags from Penang and Bombay, but for great part of the distance they consist of simple sun-dried bricks, worn almost into a slope by the pious feet of myriads of worshippers—bare feet too, for none but Europeans are allowed to mount the steps with boots on. The stairs are wonderfully uncomfortable, not merely because they are so dilapidated, but because they are seemingly constructed with the object of preventing any one from ascending or descending with unseemly haste. They are too broad to mount two at a time, and too low to suit occidental tastes taken singly. This method of enforcing respect is characteristic of the Burmese nation, and reminds one of the nails projecting through the floors in the Royal Palace at Mandalay.

The stairs debouch on a broad, open, flagged space, which runs all round the pagoda, and is left free for worshippers. From the centre of this springs from an octagonal bee-nat-daw, or plinth, the profusely gilt, solid brick payah. It has a perimeter of 1,355 feet, and rises to a height of about 370, or a little higher than St. Paul's Cathedral. On the summit is the htee, the gilt

iron-work "umbrella," on each of whose many rings hang multitudes of gold and silver jewelled bells, which tinkle melodiously with every breath of air. This htee was made and presented by Mindohn Min, the late King of Burma, and was placed on the summit at a cost of not much less than 50,000*l*. It was constructed by voluntary labour; and subscriptions in money and jewels, with which the vane and the uppermost band are richly studded, flowed in from all parts of Burma. The old king, "the convenor of the fifth great synod," strove hard to have it placed on the pagoda entirely at his own cost and by his own men; but the British Government rightly and firmly refused, for had this been done it would have been regarded by British Burmans as an acknowledgment of his suzerainty. Eventually it was handed over at the frontier to native officials and a body of Buddhist elders, by whom it was conveyed to the holy Thehngoottara Mount, and there successfully placed in position. The old htee was lowered intact, and now stands on the platform, filled in and gaily painted like a small pagoda, or a florid marriage cake, beside a still earlier decoration which it had supplanted.

At the corners of the basement are somewhat Assyrian-like figures of Manoht-theeha, creatures with two bodies and one head, half lion, half man, with huge ears and ruffled crest, and all round about are stone figures of lions displaying an ample show of teeth between their grinning lips. The tale is that long ages ago a king's son who had been abandoned in the forest, was found by a lioness and suckled by her. When the prince grew to man's estate, he left his foster-mother and swam a broad river to escape from her. The tender mother's heart burst when he reached the other side, and she died; and in remembrance of her love, lions' figures are placed at the foot of all pagoda steps, and round the building itself.

The four chapels at the foot of the pagoda are adorned at the sides by colossal figures of the sitting Buddha, and in the farthest recess, in a niche of its own, is a still more goodly figure, the thick gilding darkened in many places by the fumes of thousands of burning tapers and candles. Hundreds of Gautamas, large and small, sitting, standing, and reclining, white and black, of alabaster, sun-dried clay, or the wood of the Pehn-nè, the Jack tree (*Artocarpus integrifolia*), gilded or plain, surround and are propped up on the larger images. Even the figures in the niches are elaborate carved woodwork, representing figures dancing or fighting, and others flying through the air, or, with head on hand, sunk in meditation; monsters of the woods and hills and streams. High stone altars for the offering of rice and flowers stand before the lions, the offering being made to the whole pagoda and not to them. Under the Manoht-theehas at the corners are niche altars for burnt offerings. On the outer edge of the platform are a host of small zaydee-yan, each with its htee; tasoungs, image houses, overflowing with the gifts of generations of pilgrims; figures of the Budh in single, low stone chapels; tagohn-deing, tall posts, flaunting from which are long cylindrical streamers, of bamboo framework, pasted over with paper, depicting scenes in sacred history, and often inscribed with pious invocations from the offerer; others are surrounded by the sacred hentha, the Brahminy Goose (*Phœnicoptarus rubra*), the emblem of the Talaings, or the kalaweik, the crane of the Burmese. Interspersed among these on the outer edge of the open platform are multitudes of bells of all sizes. Beside each bell, all of which are hung on stout cross beams supported by two side posts, lie deers' antlers, and pieces of wood with which the worshipper strikes them as he passes. On the eastern side, covered by a great wooden

shed, hangs one of enormous size, inside which five or six men can stand with ease. It was presented by King Tharrawaddy in 1840, on the occasion of a state visit to Rangoon and the payah. It measures seven feet seven and a-half inches across the mouth, fifteen inches in thickness, fourteen feet high, and weighs 94,682 lbs. With a proper hammer it ought to give forth a splendid sound, but the ordinary antlers and posts of wood used fail to do it justice. It is second in size in Burma to the great bell at Mengohn, which, apart from the monster at Moscow, is the largest in the world. There is a long inscription in the Mahah Ganda (the great, sweet voice) at Rangoon, recounting the merits gained by the monarch who presented it and the praises of him chanted by the Nats, the guardians of the empire. The bell has a curious history. After the second Burmese war, the English made an attempt to carry it off to Calcutta as a trophy, but by some mishap the Mahah Ganda toppled over, and sank to the bottom of the Rangoon river. English engineers made several attempts but failed to raise it. The Burmans, after some years, begged that the sacred bell might be restored to them, if they could recover it. The petition was granted with a sneer, but they set to work, got it out, and carried it in triumph to the place where it now hangs. This success was ascribed by the thoughtful to supernatural aid, but the common people chuckled in a carnal and exultant manner over the victory, and not without very fair reason, for their appliances were of the most primitive kind.

Buddhists fix the date of the erection of the Shway Dagohn Payah at 588 B.C., but the site must have been sacred for cycles before, since the relics of the three preceding Buddhas were found interred, when the two Talaing brothers, Poo (dove) and Tapaw (plenty), came with their precious eight hairs to the Thehngoottara hill.

The original payah is said in the palm-leaf history to have been only twenty-seven feet high, and it has attained its present height by being repeatedly cased with an outer covering of bricks several feet in thickness. Every now and again it has been completely regilt. Sinbyoo Shin, king of Burma, towards the end of the last century, used his own weight in gold in the process. He scaled twelve stone three, a remarkably good weight for a Burman, and the gold used cost over 9,000*l.* The last occasion when the whole vast bulk was gilt was in 1871, when King Mindohn sent down his htee. On every feast-day and oobohnay, however, numbers of the pious clamber up wherever they can and fix on little squares of gold leaf, packets of which can be bought at the stalls below for a few rupees. The consequence is that every now and again the spire breaks out in a rash of bright patches, which give it a mysterious, rough, uneven appearance on clear moonlight nights. It is difficult to say what the real age of the building is, if, as sceptical Englishmen tell us, we are not to place implicit faith in the palm-leaf record. Trustworthy documents reach no further back than the time of the Peguan Queen Shin-saw-boo, who reigned in the early part of the sixteenth century; but there is every reason to believe that a pagoda existed there long before her time. The shrine has remained unaltered in size or shape since 1564, and probably will never be altered again. At all times and at all distances it looks imposing and sublime, like the religion whose followers have built it.

At the base of the pagoda hill are many monasteries embowered in their groves of palmyra palms, and shady trees; and to the south is a small convent of nuns, not far from the zayat, which the king of Siam had built for pilgrims from his dominions. Similar rest-houses line the Soung-dan all the way up to the pagoda, and they always

have occupants; while at the season of the feast in Taboung they are crowded to overflowing. Lepers, and cripples, and nuns in their white robes, line the steps, and cry out in piteous tones for alms from the passers by. Nearer the top and round the platform itself are sellers of candles and coloured tapers, Chinese incense-sticks, and prayer-flags, along with abundance of gold-leaf. Numbers of young girls sit about with flowers, especially of the lotos, and meats of different kinds for offerings. Others —these always enfranchised pagoda slaves—sell toys and articles for household use. The platform is never deserted. Even long after midnight the voice of the worshipper may be heard in the night air, chanting in solemn monotone his pious aspirations, while on a duty-day, and especially on a feast-day, the laughing, joyous crowd of men and maidens, in their gay national dress, makes the platform of the Shway Dagohn one of the finest sights in the world.

The Shway Dagohn Payah is by far the most widely celebrated of the great Buddhist shrines, but there are others which, if not so venerated in other lands, still enjoy an even greater local reputation for sanctity, and attract pilgrims from all parts of Burma, British and Independent, with now and again a band of pious worshippers from distant countries. Chief among these is the Shway Hmaw-daw at Pegu, which commands Talaing worship before even the shrine of "the slanted beam" on the Thehngoottara hill. The bank close by it was covered with lotos blossoms immediately on the construction of the shapely spire and the great Tha-gyah Min, and countless Byammahs and Nat-Dewahs assisted at the enshrinement of the relics. As with many other fanes, the king granted to the pagoda, and set apart from secular uses for ever, the whole space round it on which the shadow of the original pile fell between sunset and sunrise. Several

hundred families were dedicated to its service, and in 1881 large sums were raised throughout all the low country for the manufacture of a new htee and the gilding of the whole surface, while many wondrous signs in the neighbourhood attested the sacred character of the undertaking. Similarly the Shway San-daw at Prome, with its multitude of bells on the cramped hill-top, enjoys a special reputation on account of the prophecy there spoken by Shin Gautama himself, and the connection of the payah with the national hero-king, Dwoht-taboung, as recorded in the sacred books. In proof of this exists to the present day, and may be seen at the foot of the hill, a huge stone with an inscription which none but the pure-minded can read, and few even of them understand. In other places examples of this dooganan kyayganan, a kind of cypher writing or cryptograph as it appears to the unenfranchised, exists, and usually records in mystic phraseology and inverted orthography the alms presented to the pagoda. Many of the lists of donations are, however, graven in a less cramped kyouk-sah, or "stone writing," the givers having probably had a weak hankering after earthly fame. Thus a goodly marble slab with a long list of names may be seen at the Shway Hmaw-daw and a tablet near the Myah Thalohn, the Temple of the Emerald Bed (of the Buddha) at Ma-gway in Upper Burma records how Min Din and Min La-goh had in the year 2399 of religion covered the whole payah with yellow cloth, repaired it thoroughly, and had it painted red and gold. An exact account is given of the amount of materials used and the money paid to workmen, and the inscription ends up with a prayer that the family of the donors might be gratified with the birth of a son. Near it is a magic stone with the figure of a hare, surrounded by stars, deeply graven in it to represent the moon, and a peacock to represent the sun.

A frequent adjunct of many pagodas is the Shway Zet-daw, the imprint of the Lord Buddha's foot. It is too nearly square to command a painter's or sculptor's praise, and the toes are all of the same length, as may be seen in the example carried off by Captain Marryat, the novelist, in the first Burmese war, and now preserved in the British Museum. The sole is divided into a hundred and eight squares (tayah shi' kwet), and on them are many lekkhana, representations of monasteries pyathats, tigers, kalaweiks, henthas, parrots, sehppootee, fish, and the like, to signify that all things were under the feet of the great master. The number of beads on the rosary corresponds with the number of squares on the Shway Zet-daw. The most famous example is at the pagoda of that name east of Mandalay, the great resort of the Shans, and another well-known one is opposite Magway, near Minboo, where the mud volcanoes are, "the boiling vats of the nagahs." But there are many specimens all over the country, not a few with the figure of a nagah, or sea monster, reared over them.

Most famous among the small pagodas is the Kyaik-htee-yoh, insignificant in size, but unique from its position. The hill on which it stands takes its name from the payah, and is over three thousand five hundred feet in height. On its summit are numbers of granitoid boulders, many of them balanced in a most extraordinary way, and all the more striking surmounted by little shrines. The Kyaik-htee-yoh stands on a huge boulder, which itself rests on a projecting rock, separated from the rest of the hill by a chasm, fathomless to the eye, and reaching, so say the villagers, far below the depth of the hill. The boulder stands on the extreme verge of the bare rock, and hangs over it as if a gust of wind or a few extra pounds added would make it topple over and crash down the dizzy

height far away into the green valley below. To this shrine people from all parts of the country, but more especially the Talaings, come in the month of February, and cast jewellery and precious stones into the yawning rift, and, clambering up the rock by the aid of a bamboo ladder, cover the payah with flowers and small lighted candles, making it look like a new nebulous constellation from the far-off plains. Inquirers are told with the utmost confidence that the pagoda is five thousand years old. It certainly has been there time out of mind, and the boulder has solely been kept in its place by the hair buried under the shrine, and given to a hermit by the great Budh himself when he returned from Tawa-dehntha, the second heaven of the Nat-dewahs, on the occasion of his preaching the Law to his mother. Near it is a spring which always flows freely with crystalline water, unless there is evil talk among the assembled people or if the sexes are not separated. A complete Thin-bohng-gyee, the alphabet, is graven on the rock. The view from the pagoda is superb; bounded on the east by the blue Martaban hills, fading away into the dim peaks of Siam, and extending southwards over tangled jungle and yellow paddy lands to the bright waves of the Gulf of Martaban, while to the west the jewelled speck of the pagoda at Pegu almost leads one to imagine the stately bulk of the sacred Shway Dagohn beyond.

There are many such shrines on the abrupt limestone hills in the Maulmein district, where the devotee has to clamber up bare rock faces and scramble through treacherous débris, occasionally swinging over perilous deeps on the precarious footing of a rough bamboo ladder; his offerings tied to his back and his heart between his teeth. And yet women are found to make the ascent, especially at the Zwè-kabin, the precipitous "Duke of York's Nose,"

some forty miles up the Sittang river from Maulmein, where the Englishman is lost in amazement as to how they ever got the bricks and ironwork up the rocks to construct the pagoda and the htee. Yet thousands of people scramble up at the time of the annual feast, and the pagoda is as well adorned with offerings as any in the flat lands down by the sea, where a rise of a few feet in the ocean would put hundreds of square miles under water.

Every district pagoda has its special feast and all are well attended, for even though the locality may be thinly populated there are always to be found visitors from other places round about; partly as a kind of neighbourly courtesy, partly because there is always some fun in the shape of a travelling troupe, or a marionette play, at a pagoda feast, and chiefly, there can be no denying, from a feeling of genuine piety and a real desire to acquire merit. Pagoda feasts enable a Burman to see the world, as far as it can be seen in his native land. Without the periodical festivals he would only stop chewing betel in the wattled bothy where he was born to go out and smoke a cherut round his patch of paddy land, and speculate on the time when the Rangoon or Bassein broker would come up to buy his crop from him. Most of the district Burmans would never see the Englishman and his doings were it not for the annual pilgrimage to Rangoon to worship at Shway Dagohn. During the rest of the year, unless he lives in the head-quarters of an assistant commissionership, all he sees of the British occupation is a stray visit from a young official out shooting, or the chance appearance of an inspector of police in search of a criminal.

Similarly very few Burmans, except those drafted off for service in the capital, would ever visit Mandalay were it not for the great "Arakan pagoda." The Mahah Myat Moonee Payah is rendered especially sacred by the sitting

image of Shin Gautama there preserved, and is on this account regarded by Upper Burmans as not inferior in sanctity to the Shway Dagohn itself. The huge brass image, twelve feet in height, was brought over the hills from Akyab in the year 1784 (1146 B.E.). According to the inscription, the king drew this Arakan Gautama to the shrine by the charm of his piety, but the historical books speak only of rough force of arms. However that may be, it is a mystery how the huge masses of metal—the figure was cast in three sections—were brought over the steep, pathless mountain sides. The inscription flatters the king, and the monks ascribe the feat to supernatural help, as they do the faultless joining together of the pieces. The image was set up, so says the legend, during the lifetime of the great master. The utmost skill and most persistent energy had failed in fitting the parts together, and the feelings of the pious were fearfully lacerated by the cracking of the head in their futile struggles. But the Buddha, perceiving from afar what was going on, and ever full of pity, came himself to the spot, and embracing the image seven times, so joined together the fragments that the most sceptical eye cannot detect the points of junction, while the head was restored to its pristine smoothness. So like was the image, and so sublime the effulgence which shone around during the manifestation, that the reverently gazing crowd could not determine which was the model and which the master. The resemblance has no doubt faded away with the wickedness of later times, for unlike most Burmese images, the Payah Gyee has most gross and repulsive features. Inspired by the divine embrace the figure spoke, but afterwards received the Teacher's command never again to open its lips till Areemadehya should come to reveal the new Law. The shrine in which it stands is one

of the most splendid in the country. The image itself is covered by a great seven-roofed pya-that with goodly pillars, the ceiling gorgeous with mosaics. Long colonnades, supported on 252 massive pillars, all richly gilt and carved, with frescoed roofs and sides, lead up to it, and daily from the royal palace come sumptuous offerings in stately procession, marshalled by one of the ministers and shaded by the white umbrella, the emblem of sovereignty and the prerogative of the Arbiter of Existence. On its first arrival a hundred and twenty families of Arakanese were assigned as slaves of the payah, and the number was frequently afterwards added to. In a long gallery there is an enormous number of inscriptions, gathered from all parts of the country, many on gilt slabs of marble, a still greater number on sandstone. All day long circles of constantly renewed worshippers chant aloud the praises of the Buddha, and the air is heavy with the effluvia of candles and the odours from thousands of smouldering incense sticks. Within the precincts of the pagoda is a large tank, tenanted by sacred turtle, who wax huge on the rice and cakes thrown them by the multitudes of pilgrims. Probably not even at the Shway Dagohn Payah is more enthusiastic devotion shown than at the Payah Gyee in Mandalay.

Near the royal city, about nine miles up the river, on the right bank, is a huge monster of a pagoda, built on a low green bluff, running out from the barren, pagoda-sprinkled Sagaing hills. The groundwork of the great mis-shapen Mengohn Payah covers a square of 450 feet and its height is 155 feet, about one-third of the elevation intended for it when completed; but Mintaya Gyee, the crack-brained monarch who founded it, ran short of funds, and the building was stopped. Nature was jealous of the miniature mountain—the largest mass of brickwork in

the world—and an earthquake in 1839 rent the gigantic cube with fantastic fissures from top to bottom, and cast down great masses of masonry, tons upon tons in weight, and yet not sufficient to destroy the main structure, massive and imperishable as Time itself. There it stands, unharmed alike by rain-floods and blistering suns, and laughing even at earthquakes. Perhaps it was this proud stability which induced the late king, Mindohn Min, to attempt an even greater work. He planned a huge shrine to be raised east of Mandalay, under the shadow of the Shan hills. The Yankeen-toung Payah was to be larger than the Mengohn monster, and it was to be built of stone. A fair-sized hill was hewn into blocks to furnish material. Canals several miles long were dug to convey the stones, and huge lighters were built upon them. The whole kingdom was called upon to furnish men to labour a few months at a time on the pious work. Architects, monks, foreigners, were called upon to offer suggestions and make plans. A French engineer, who declared that, with 5,000 men working every day, it would require eighty-four years to complete the original design, came near being crucified on the spot. After four years' labour the basement, some four feet high, was completed, and then the convenor of the Fifth Great Synod returned to the village of Nats. Theebaw Min is the last man likely to finish the work, and there lie the mountains of squared stones and the heaps of rubble for the centre. The canals are silting up and the lighters foundering with their unloaded cargoes, and instead of a monument, King Mindohn has simply left a ghastly chaos. What kan King Mintaya Gyee must have had to get so far as he did!

The whole neighbourhood of Mandalay, Amarapoora and Ava, is rich with splendid fanes; but a detailed account of them would only weary the reader, as the

visiting of them tires out the non-religious observer. Nevertheless some must at least be adverted to. There is the Koo-thoo-daw, the "Royal Merit House," the richly-gilt shrine built by King Theebaw's uncle, the "War Prince," one of the most compact and tastefully adorned of pagodas, with beautifully carved gilt gates, the main spire being surrounded by a triple square of shrines, each shrine containing a marble slab engraved with a chapter of the Beetaghat on the back and front. The text of the three volumes of the Buddhist Scripture was carefully collated by the most learned Sadaws in the royal city, and is considered the best extant.

Especially interesting also is the Atoo-ma-shee, the incomparable payah, the great, oblong, lofty-terraced chapel of his late majesty, outwardly plain white, but within splendid with a gorgeously decorated shrine, purple and scarlet, and gold hangings, and velvet carpets. Here are preserved the gold spittoon, betel box, kalawaik, and other paraphernalia of the late king.

Down the river there are hundreds of others of every variety and degree of decoration. There is the Nagah Yohn Payah, the whole building wrought into the form of a dragon; the huge round-domed Koung-hmoo-daw, and the "king's victory pagoda" at Sagaing, the "golden cock-scratching," on the other side, commemorating a favourite legend of the boundless charity of the Budh. Glistening white pinnacles, or flashing gold spires, far up the Sagaing hills, with thousands of steps wending wearily up over the steep, rough hill-side, and gazing up to them from the Amarapoora side, great massy temples, frowning over the river with all the stern solidity of a knightly hold. Each with its legend, some tale of bloodshed or piety, some event in Burmese history, or birth-story of the Buddha.

Most renowned, however, for its pagodas is Pagahn, in many respects the most remarkable religious city in the world. Jerusalem, Rome, Kieff, Benares, none of them can boast the multitude of temples, and the lavishness of design and ornament that make marvellous the deserted capital on the Irrawaddy. Deserted it practically is, for the few flimsy huts that stand by the river are inhabited only by pagoda slaves and men condemned to perpetual beggary. For eight miles along the river-bank and extending to a depth of two miles inland, the whole space is thickly studded with pagodas of all sizes and shapes, and the very ground is so thickly covered with crumbling remnants of vanished shrines, that according to the popular saying you cannot move foot or hand without touching a sacred thing. Some of the zaydees are all but perfect. Restored by the pious, they stand out glistening snow-white, only to render more striking the hoary, weather-beaten ruins of their less-cared-for neighbours. Here the bell-shaped, solid pyramid of Lower Burma is rarely seen. The religious structures fully merit the word temple as understood in ordinary language. To quote Colonel Yule, who gives a detailed account of the principal shrines in his *Mission to Ava*, there are all kinds: "The bell-shaped pyramid of dead brickwork in all its varieties; the same raised over a square or octagonal cell, containing an image of the Buddha; the bluff, knob-like dome of the Ceylon Dagobats, with the square cap which seems to have characterised the most ancient Buddhist *chaityas*, as represented in the sculptures at Sanchi, and in the ancient model pagodas found near Buddhist remains in India; the fantastic bo-payah, or pumpkin pagoda, which seemed rather like a fragment of what we might conceive the architecture of the moon than anything terrestrial, and many variations on these types. But the predominant

and characteristic form is that of the cruciform vaulted temple."

The Irrawaddy just below Pagahn widens out like a gigantic lake to over two miles in breadth, and the view of the sacred city from far down the river is particularly fine. Towering above the others rise the great temples of Ananda, Ta-pyee-nyoo, and Gawdapalin, like visions of old-world cathedrals strayed into the desert. Round about them gradually rise into view hoary round towers, like a border "peel"; airy minarets as of an underground mosque; apparitions like the pyramids, chiselled into fairy terraced fretwork; huge bulbous mushrooms with slim lanterns on their backs, like the wide studio of a mad architect. There is a memorial line which, placing letters for numbers, declares the sum total of the pagodas to be 9999.

> "Hlè win-yoh than ta-nyan nyan
> Pagahn payah poung."
>
> The cartwheel's creaking strains
> Pass Pagahn's storied fanes.

Probably however there are not nearly so many in anything like a complete state. Pagahn ceased to be capital in 1284 A.D. The Emperor of China had sent a vast army to avenge the murder of an ambassador. The Burmese king pulled down a thousand arched temples, a thousand smaller ones, and four thousand square temples to strengthen the fortifications. But a prophecy found under one of the desecrated shrines robbed him of his courage, and he fled to the south; and ever since Pagahn has remained in its present practically deserted state. The whole ground within the old walls is strewn with bricks and mortar. Some of the zaydees are strangled with jungle growth, huge bushes spring from their summits and sides and tear the masonry asunder, and with the

vast majority no attempt is made to arrest the ravages of time.

Few, if any, contain actual relics. The cloistered and terraced temples are simply receptacles for huge images of the Buddha and others. The corridors of the Ananda and Gawdapalin are filled with sculptured groups representing events in the life of the Great Master, and figures of eminent disciples and yahanda. In the central recesses where are the colossal figures of the Buddhas, the light is cunningly admitted from above so as to fall on the calm gilded face, producing a most weird and striking effect. But Pagahn would require a monograph itself, and with it should be compared Shway Goo, between Mandalay and Bhamaw. That sacred island is a perfect forest of pagodas, and only fails to obtain wider fame because of the existence of Pagahn. There are 999 shrines within its limits, and a much larger proportion of these exist intact than is the case with Pagahn, though none of them can compare with the magnificence of the Ananda.

The question of the architecture of the Pagahn temples, which is so different in style from that found in other parts of Burma, has been fully discussed in Colonel Yule's admirable *Mission to Ava*. He omits however to notice the fact that Anawrata-saw Min, when he established Buddhism in Pagahn, built all the pagodas and temples after the exact model of those then existing in Thatohn, in the same order and of the same size. The town of Thatohn, above Maulmein, was the first settlement of Thawna and Ohttara, the missionaries from Central India who introduced the teachings of the Lord Buddha into Burma. There was certainly an ancient Hindu colony there, and its inhabitants may have brought some notions of their architecture with them. But whether this be so or not, Burmans find source for pride in the admitted fact that

"there is nothing in India to compare with the classical beauty of some of the smaller temples, or the stupendous architectural majesty of the Ananda, or the Ta-pyee-nyoo."

The following song is taken from a very favourite play, *Sawpay Sawmay*, written by a Pegu dramatist and published in 1880, and gives an idea of the canticles sung at the dedication of pagodas and similar ceremonies. It is set to a very popular air, the Yohdaya Nan-thehn Than, "the Siamese Palace Tune," but I have not ventured to try to reproduce the original complicated metre. The sikkè or magistrate in question was Oo Moung Galay, a younger brother of Oo Ohn, the only Burmese C.I.E. as yet, and late second judge of the Small Cause Court in Rangoon :—

THE GILDING OF THE SHWAY MAW-DAW.

Far-famed and bright, the Shway Maw-Daw
Is known where'er the Sacred Law
To toiling millions brings the peace,
Bids grief be still and turmoil cease.
Fair glory of Peguan land
Revered on earth's most distant strand,
Not more Dagohn's great golden pile
Hath honour in the Southern Isle,
Where'er beneath the zampoo tree
The pious bend the suppliant knee,
Than thou the glorious lotus shrine
High temple of the hairs divine.
As leaps on high the funeral flame
Of some yahan of sainted name,
A beacon light to neh'ban's rest
And haven sure to men distressed,
So skywards reared, thy shapely spire
Upsprings a pyramid of fire.

The hoar seer's words are now proved true,
Spoke ages since while yet all new
The callow world in earnest youth
Revered the Buddha's law of truth,

Ere yet the wiles of lust and wrath
Beguiled men from the Noble Path,
And ignorance of sins, the worst
With which the race of man is cursed:
When white men reign
Thy glories wane,
Yet blaze again
While yet they reign.

High honour to our Sikkè Min,
Who purged away the stain of sin.
Now radiant as a mass of gold,
The temple glitters as of old;
Ten thousand districts chant his name,
The Sekyah systems vaunt his fame,
High winner of the holy rest.
Thrice is the benefactor blessed.
For him the last of lives is run
The ferry past and neh'ban won.
Great guerdon gains such gift as this,
A sainted name, eternal bliss,
On earth renown will live for aye,
Beyond ne'er more to breathe a sigh.
When as the sacred work was wrought
The Tha-gyah Min came down unsought,
Sweet music breathed from angel bands
And Dewas sped the workers' hands,
A nimbus shone around the spire
And gleamed each gem with holy fire,
As though on high in lucent coil
The sacred hair smiled on the toil,
And once again in hermit guise
The Buddha Prince blessed the emprise.

Hast seen the lotos-bud in prayer
Fold fervent leaves; with odours rare
Invoke the Buddha's gracious power
To save mankind in danger's hour?
Hast seen the pohngyee's garb of peace,
The golden robe, strong to release
The suppliant from endless strife,
Unceasing change, the pains of life?
So prayerful stands the holy fane,
So new-born gleams in golden grain;

And calmly sleep the hairs divine,
Meet relic for so fair a shrine;
And hither on the holy day
From far and near men wend their way
And kneeling pray that they may gain
Release from fitful change and pain.
Ah, Saviour Buddha, hear them call
And grant the long, last life to all.

High striving to the upper air,
Great convent of the Sacred Hair,
Thou'st stood upon the foreland's brow
From misty ages e'en till now.
The Budh himself, with his own mouth,
Stood on this hill, and, looking south,
Foretold that on this spot should stand
A fane far-famed in farthest land;
And hither came the brethren twain
And reared with stone of precious vein
A lordly pile and gilt it o'er
And many a monarch added store,
Till last of all our Sikkè came
And joined to theirs a pious name.
From youngest years till hoarest hours,
Peguans all, great fame is ours;
Two Henthas dwelt here, male and mate,
Ten thousand kings kept regal state,
And ever till the kalpas end
Will pious pilgrims hither wend.
Ah, Sikkè, great reward is thine,
Thy fame doth last while lasts the shrine
And ere the shrine falls, falls the world.

Pegu was the capital of the Talaing kingdom of Hanthawadee. Shin Gautama foretold that it would be founded in the 1,116th year of his religion, and gave two of his hairs to two brothers, Mahah Thala and Soola Thala, to enshrine on the Thoodathana Myintheela Hill. A pagoda fifty cubits high was erected over them, and this was the original of the Shway Maw (or Hmaw)-daw Payah.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LEGEND OF THE RANGOON PAGODA.

At the end of the last world-period five lotos-buds sprang up on the Thehngoottara Hill, where now the Shway Dagohn pagoda stands. They opened their leaves and disclosed each of them within its chalice a thengan, the holy yellow robe of the monastic brethren. Then a huge bird settled on the top of the hill and laid an egg, and from this was presently hatched the kala-waik, the carrying bird of Vishnu, which seized the sacred garments and flew up to the heavens. This was an omen foretelling the appearance of five Buddhas in the present world cycle, and accordingly the universe which had existed in the preceding kalpa was shortly afterwards destroyed, with Mount Meru, the enclosing Set-ya-wala hills, the six heavens of the nat-dewas, and many of the lower seats of Byammahs. Then followed myriads of years of chaos; then myriads more while the present world called Badda was being constructed atom by atom, and at last the earth was ready and prepared to receive the first Buddha, Kaukkathan. He left his staff on the Thehngoottara Hill; his successor Gawnagohng deposited his water-filter beside it, and the third Buddha, Kathapa, added a portion of his robe.

In the time of the fourth Buddha, Gautama, there

lived on the Thehngoottara Hill, a gigantic scorpion, so huge that it devoured every day an elephant, and the tusks of its many victims were set up in a great ring fence round about its den. One day seven foreign ships passed along the coast. The sailors saw the white glimmer of the ivory from far out at sea, and landed to ascertain what it was. They began loading their ships with the precious treasure; and were working their hardest, when suddenly they saw the giant scorpion coming straight at them. They rushed on board, cut their cables, and stood out to sea. But here a new danger awaited them. A monster crab reared two gigantic claws out of the waters and threatened to crush anything that passed between. But there was no retreat, and, overwhelmed with terror, they drove before the wind. The vessels just managed to pass through without touching the claws with their yards or masts; but the scorpion, following in hot pursuit, rushed up against both pincers with its bulky body, and they closed in an instant, crushing and rending the monstrous prey. The crab itself died of the poisonous food, and the neighbourhood of the holy hill was thus freed from its terrors.

Not long afterwards another ship sailed in these waters. Near Twantay, a town about twenty miles from the present capital of British Burma, lived a pious Talaing merchant, who had two sons named Poo, or dove, and Tapaw, or plenty. These young men heard that there was a famine in the western lands, and set sail thither with a shipload of rice. They landed at the mouth of the Ganges, and having procured five hundred waggons, loaded them with their grain and travelled into the Waythalee country. There one day their waggons were suddenly arrested, and as it were chained to the earth. While they were seeking for the cause, a nat, who in a previous existence had been their mother, appeared to them and asked:

"Desire ye store of gold and precious things, or rather desire ye heavenly treasure?" They answered, "Heavenly treasure." Thereupon the nat bade them go to where Shin Gautama, the embryo Buddha, was sitting beneath the yaza-yatana tree in the seventh period of seven days' meditation, which immediately preceded his becoming perfect. They laid a sack of rice reverently at his feet, and in return received four hairs each. The Buddha renamed them Taposa and Paleeka, and enjoined them to deposit the hairs on the Thehngoottara Hill, beside the relics of the three preceding Budhs. The place was to be determined by the "takoon," a felled wood-oil tree "lying athwart," so that neither the top nor the roots touched the ground.

The brothers, happy in the possession of such inestimable relics, enclosed them in a golden casket, hastened back to their ship and set sail. But they visited many a distant shore without gaining any tidings of the whereabouts of the Thehngoottara mount. In vain they besought the nats, the beeloos, and yekkathas, good genii, ogres, and demons, of whom there were many upon earth in those days. The spirits knew no more than the men. At last the king of the Tha-gyahs took pity upon them, came down from the heavens, and appearing before the seekers in the guise of a nat, told them to return to their own native land. There, not far from their birthplace, Twantay, was the hill they sought for, and the only being who could point it out to them was the guardian spirit of the hill, the aged Soolay nat. But this guardian nat had lived so long upon earth that his eyelids had become weak and heavy and had fallen together, so that he was stone blind. Before he could help them at all it would be necessary to restore to him his eyesight, and this could only be done by hoisting up his eyelids with two great wooden props. The

Soolay nat was of gigantic stature, and the two brothers sought about in the forest for the tallest oil-palms they could find, cut them down, lopped them into shape, and then went out in quest of the aged guardian spirit. At length they found him, so thickly covered with ancient moss and lichens that it was difficult to recognise a living creature in him. When he was asked where the Thehn-goottara Hill lay he became suspicious, and brought forward his blindness as an excuse for not being able to indicate its situation. But the two brothers were prepared with their remedy. They got their two great beams into position, and after much trouble managed to hoist up his heavy lids so far that the light fell in a narrow streak on his pupils. Soolay then indicated with a wave of his hand in what direction they were to go, and Taposa and Paleeka set off again on their search. But here they encountered a new difficulty. Instead of one hill they found three, with a lake in the middle of them, and there was nothing to show where the staff, the filter, and the bathing robe of the previous three Budhs lay buried. They were in despair, but the king of the Tha-gyahs again came to their aid. He descended with his subject dewahs during the night and united the three peaks into one. The next day the brothers felled the tree on the summit and it fulfilled the required conditions. "It remained poised on its centre on the peak. Its top touched not the ground, and its root touched not the ground. Therefore the place was called in the Mohn language, Takoon." A pagoda was built twenty-seven feet high, and all the land round about on which its shadow fell between sunrise and sunset was consecrated to it for ever. The dewah king prepared a golden boat to hold the casket containing the hairs, and this vessel circled about perpetually on the lake, and was protected by water-wheels, whose spokes were

prolonged into great swords and knives that struck out in all directions and turned without ceasing, except for a moment at midday, when they halted for the space of time during which a woman might draw out a thread from her spinning-loom.

Long after, the royal elder brother of China, King Oodibwa, during his wars with the Burmans was exceedingly anxious to carry off the sacred relics which are deposited in the Rangoon shrine. He prepared a magic figure in human form and despatched it to steal the Budhs' remains. The creature crawled all the way down the Irrawaddy on its stomach until it arrived at the suburb of Rangoon called Kemindine ("the looking-post"). There it raised its head to look for a moment, and was so overcome by the splendour of the shrine that it delayed too long, and when at length it stretched out its hands to steal the relics, the favourable moment at noon was passed, and the whirling swords cut it in pieces. Since then the whole of the treasures have been walled up in the relic-chamber, whence nothing but the entire destruction of the payah could remove them. The marvellous wealth of the shrine has been a fruitful source of wonder and speculation to many. Nevertheless the statement of Sonnerat that the spire, which has now risen to a height of nearly 370 feet, has a narrow funnel, descending from the top down to the basement, and that down this shaft princes, rich men and the religious of all nations, cast gold and silver and precious stones, has a foundation only in the imagination of the Gallic writer. The crown or "umbrella" at the top is known to be crusted thick on the upper ring with precious stones, and from it hang scores of jewelled gold bells, placed there in recent times, but to the mysterious relic-chamber no one has penetrated for hundreds of years, nor probably ever will. The Burman,

it cannot be too much urged, is not an idolater. He worships neither relic nor image. The pagoda and the figure only supply him with a seemly place to utter the praises of the great Buddha, and to form resolutions to imitate, as far as he can, the charity and the sinless life of the great model.

CHAPTER XVII.

IMAGES.

THERE are few things which more irritate an educated Burman than to assert, or as most English do, calmly assume, that the Burmese are idolaters. The national idea is that idol-worship is especially the characteristic of the lowest savage tribes, and even fetichism is considered a superior faith. Therefore the accusation of bowing down to stocks and stones is intolerable, and the implication is combated with feverish energy. Where there are no prayers, in the technical sense of the word, there can be no idolatry. No one, not even Shin Gautama himself, can help a man in his strivings to lead a holy life. None but the individual in his own person can work out his special salvation, and he tries to do so by setting a splendid ideal before his mind. The words uttered before the impassive features of the Budh are not a supplication for mercy or aid, but the praises of the great Lord himself, through the contemplation of whose triumphant victory over passions and ignorance the most sinful may be led to a better state.

There is no Supreme Being; the Buddha himself, who even while he was on earth was no more than a perfect, sinless man, no longer exists to make intercession, were there any such power to which one might appeal. The

only thing to be done is to praise, and in praising to strive to imitate, and through imitation to attain to the perfect knowledge, and so to the final deliverance, the exemption from the four burdens of heaviness, age, sickness, and death, which is the restful absorption of Neh'ban.

The worshippers of all creeds have always sought for a special place wherein to pay their devotions. The Burman erects a pagoda over sacred relics, and puts up an image of the great Lord of Truth there, not to worship, but to afford a means to the pious of localising their feelings and concentrating their thoughts on the supreme model. The candles and smoky oil lamps, the fruits and flowers offered on the shrine, are no more signs of idolatry than the offertory bag placed on the altar by the Christian priest. The Yatana Kalapa is perfectly distinct on this point. Under the heading U'bhato Kotito Panha we find it written, "It is bootless to worship the Buddha; nothing is necessary but to revere him and the memory of him. Statues are only useful in so far as they refresh the memory; for as the farmer sows the seed and gathers in the grain in due season, so will the man who trusts in the Buddha and holds fast by his sacred Law obtain the deliverance and pass into Neh'ban. The earth and the Buddha are alike in themselves inert."

There is thus no doubt left as to what the great master and his interpreters intended. The worship of the payah is nothing more than a simulation of the devotion which would be paid to Shin Gautama were he still upon earth. The Buddha is admired, he is lauded, he is tenderly loved; and this devotion is extended to the figures which are erected in remembrance of him, in recognition of his blameless life, the supreme wisdom which enabled him to teach the Law, and the great compassion and benevolence with which he regarded all living things. The

characteristics of a Budh are the exercise of the Three Great Works of Perfection, the constant practising of the Ten Great Virtues, and the Five Renouncings; and to attain the deliverance all must diligently strive to observe these. The Three Great Works of Perfection are :—

1. Assistance afforded to parents and relations.

2. Great offerings made in this and previous existences, coupled with the strict observance of the different enactments of the Law.

3. Benevolent dispositions towards all beings indiscriminately.

The Ten Great Virtues are :—liberality; observance of the precepts of the Law; retreat into lonely places; diligence; patience; fortitude; wisdom; benevolence; truthfulness; indifference.

The Five Renouncings are the giving up, for holiness' sake, of—children; wife; goods; life; one's self.

This cannot all be effected in one existence, unless piety has been exhibited in many previous lives. Much depends on one's kan, the accumulation of merits from past time. Just as the fruits on a tree are some of them good, some bad, but have little or nothing in common with each other, or with those that went before, or may come after, so it is with a man's kan. But the diligent observance of the holy precepts, and especially the exercise of open-handed charity, will always tend to reduce the number of lives to be endured before the deliverance comes.

Prayer there is none in the technical sense of the word, and the doxologies repeated at the shrines are mostly those learnt in childhood at the monastery school, or special compositions of each individual for himself. There is nothing laid down in any of the Buddhist religious books concerning the formulæ of prayer. What-

ever there is, is taken from the A-pyin Oung-gyin, the record of the triumph of Shin Gautama over the outer foes, Mahn-nat, the spirit of evil, and his daughters, and the A-twin Oung-gyin, the triumph over the inward foes, the keelaythah, the passions of mankind. Many, however, repeat little more than the tharana-gohng, the form with which the pohn-gyees almost invariably commence worship: "I worship the Buddha; I worship the Law; I worship the Assembly." This, with the aneh'sah, dohkka, anatta, "change, pain, illusion," forms the sentence to be repeated on the rosary. A very usual form of doxology commonly taught to the scholars in the kyoungs, and therefore retained through life, is the following:—"Awgatha, Awgatha, I worship with the body, with the mouth, and with the mind, with these three kans. The first, the second, the third; once, twice, until three times. The Lord, the precious one; the Law, the precious one; the Assembly, the precious one; these three precious things. I, the worshipper, most humbly, with fervid zeal, with clasped hands, pay reverence, give offerings, and with pious gaze bow me down. Thus by this worshipping I gain merit and increase in earnestness and purity of heart, and am freed from the Four States of Punishment; from the Three Evil Things, starvation, plague, and warfare; from the Eight Chambers of Hell; and from the Five Enemies. And at the end, when the last existence has come for me, may I pass into Neh'ban."

Such "prayers" are addressed not merely to the image, but to the whole pagoda, and not even on the platform of the latter. It is common for the pious at any period of the day to repeat their devotions simply in the direction of the pagoda, and often from a spot where hardly even the summit of it can be seen. The pilgrims to the

Shway Dagohn Payah in Rangoon prostrate themselves at intervals from the moment they catch sight of its glittering spire; but they repeat nothing further than the above, or some more fanciful formula, such as this: "Awgatha, Awgatha, Awgatha, I worship the footsteps of the great, the brilliant Buddha, to whom even the savage hunters turn, and the fierce dragons on the mountain tops and the abysses of the hills. In the far land of Theeho (Ceylon) there, where, in the wilderness of woods, far from human dwellings, temples and pagodas rise up 84,000 in number, in the caves and the deeps; there I worship, there I bow me in devotion." By far the greater number, however, repeat simple Pali sentences, of which they have long forgotten the meaning, if indeed they ever knew it. Many of the pyin-sin can repeat whole books and chapters in the sacred tongue, without having any but a very confused notion of the meaning of what they utter. Yet even this parrot-like performance has its merit, for it brings the mind into a fit state to contemplate the great ideal. A conclusive proof of this is recorded in the Malla Lingaya Woottoo, the life of Shin Gautama. There were many bats who lived in a cave in the time of the last Buddha, Kathapa, and great numbers of yahans were in the habit of resorting to this cave to meditate and give themselves up to devotion. These bats learned to repeat some of the phrases which they heard, but could not understand, and this pious exercise resulted in such benefit to their kan, that on their death they migrated to the seats of nat-dewahs. Afterwards, when Shin Gautama was preaching upon earth, they again appeared upon the seat of man as yahans, and, attending diligently to the precepts of the Law, were the first, as disciples of Thari-pootra, one of the chief followers of the Buddha, to

comprehend the sublime law of the Abeedamma. If dumb creatures then can win such rewards for piety, how much more a man who repeats his sentences with at least a consciousness of what their import is.

Similar to this feeling with regard to the Pali jargon, of which every Burman knows more or less, according to the length of his stay in the monastery or the depth of his religious sentiments, and prompted by a like idea, is the offering of little nan-tagohn. These prayer-flags—kyet-sha-teing, as they are sometimes called—are made of paper, cut fancifully into figures of dragons, lizards, and the like, with embroidery-work round their edges. In the centre is written some pious reflection or aspiration, and the offerer places it on the shrine. Most of those sold ready composed for the worshipper are in Pali, those which he writes for himself in Burmese. Samples of these inscriptions are :—

"By means of this paper the offerer will become very strong."

"By the merit of this paper Wednesday's children will be blessed by spirits and men."

"May the man born on Friday gain reward for his pious offering."

"This paper is an offering for people born on any day of the week from Sunday to Saturday."

"May the man born on Monday be freed from sickness and from the Three Calamities."

Very often nothing but the names of certain days of the week are written on the nan-tagohn; but sometimes a friend of humanity, or a man with a particularly large family, covering with their birthdays the whole week, simply writes down the names of the days in any order he pleases. The commonest form at the stalls round

about the Shway Dagohn is this simple, bald list, and indeed Rangoon is particularly badly supplied in this way. There are other small flags or streamers made of coloured cloth, some of them, especially those presented by the Shans, stitched with many pies until they stand out quite stiff. Others again are made of varnished strips of zinc. These have nothing written on them, and stand simply for the advancement in piety of their offerers, as do the candles representing the various nan, the animals which stand for the days of the week. Other offerings are flowers, single or arranged in bouquets, and almost invariably distinguished by the heavy sweetness of their odour. Candles and tapers, of all sizes and styles of manufacture, abound; some a couple of feet high, or occasionally much more, made of long, narrow coloured tapers, plaited together over an ordinary solid one, some plain white, others coloured all the hues of the rainbow, European manufactured sperm or paraffin articles, and home-made tapers of the crudest style of dip. Side by side with these are placed smoky oil-lamps, consisting of a little flat saucer full of oil, with a wick composed of a bit of cloth or a few threads of cotton roughly twisted together. The candles are simply softened with a match at the bottom and made to stick on the ledges in front of or round about the figures of the Buddha. Incense sticks and scented wood are often burnt on stone altars erected specially for such fire offerings.

The worshippers, if they are men, squat down, neither kneeling nor sitting down, but resting the body on their heels as miners who are accustomed to low workings do. The body is bent a little forward, and the hands are joined together and raised to the forehead. The women kneel down altogether, and for this reason take especial care to cover up their feet, sometimes getting a friend to

tuck their skirts over them. All are of course barefooted. The sandals are removed always at the foot of the pagoda steps, though these may begin in some places many hundred yards away from the shrine. Before commencing the repetition of the formulæ, three prostrations are made with the forehead to the ground, and the same is repeated at the close, and on rising to depart you must turn to the right. It is usual to hold some offering between the hands during worship—a prayer-flag, a flower, or something of the kind—and this is afterwards reverently deposited on the altar. A favourite offering, instead of real flowers, is pouk-pouk. This is the variety of rice known as kouk hnyin, fired dry on a pan. It swells up and cracks open, and the grains are then dyed red, green, or yellow, while some are left plain white. The resemblance to flowers or flower-leaves at a distance is sufficiently striking. It is a work of merit to go about lighting tapers and candles which have blown out, or lamps which have got choked up, watering flowers, and so on.

The statues of Shin Gautama, then, are only his visible representatives to keep alive in the hearts of his flock feelings of love and adoration, and gratitude to the great Master who strove so long to teach the Law, and was ever so pitiful towards earthly suffering. Like the Egyptians, Buddhists have large images, but stand diametrically opposed to them in the way in which they regard them. All the Egyptian's energies were directed to conquering the hostile powers of nature. He sought with anxious care to preserve the mummy in the recesses of huge mountains of stone, in order that the soul returning after the period of 5,000 years might enter again its old home. He built for eternity, and hoped to defy decay and outlast the world. The Buddhist laughs at this notion, seeing that for him the stream of time levels and carries

off every existence with it. The rising again of spirits has for him nothing but a suggestion of devilish arts. The idea raises in his mind a threatening of evil, as well to the living as to the disembodied spirit. Instead therefore of devising any such uncanny measures for the preservation of the corpse, he strives rather to destroy it as soon as may be on the funeral pyre, or even to blow it into small atoms with fireworks and bombs. Similarly, his images are made of mouldering brick. Where is the use of laboriously carving figures in the hardest stone, when the most indestructible of them could only last for a time which is but as a ripple in the stream of eternity? Therefore the marble and brass Gautamas are but few compared with those of brick and mortar, or wood, and the crumbling away and rotting of these is viewed with the utmost equanimity. There will always be piety enough to keep the tazoung full until the cycles end.

The popular division of the Gautamas is into the classes of standing, sitting, and lying. This is somewhat crude, but it is perpetuated by a curious notion that though a man may present all three kinds of images, he must do so in a special order: the standing first, then the sitting, and last the lying down. As many as one pleases of one style may be presented, but you must not reverse the order: one dare not go backwards. The vast majority of images represent the master in the cross-legged attitude in which he attained the Bhuddhaship, seated under the bawdee tree. This sitting figure is called Tin-myin-kway. The left hand lies palm upwards in the lap; the right hangs over the knee. The ears reach to the shoulder, and the face is calm and passionless. On the top of the head is a little knob or point like a young. This is called the manee-daw, and represents the hair which Prince Theiddat cut off with his sword when he first put on the yellow

robe. It was left a quarter of an inch long, and never grew again. In attaining to the supreme wisdom, the Prince attained to the Neh'ban, or annihilation of the passions.

Less common are the Shin-bin-thah-young, the recumbent figures representing the Budh as he died and attained to the Neh'ban of earthly existence, reclining between the two sahl-trees. He lies on his right side, and is often represented with numbers of his lamenting disciples ranged around the couch. To these are not uncommonly added circles of the kings of the earth and the heavens, beeloos, galohns, nats, yekkathas, and a variety of other creatures. The figures of the latter often display some artistic skill in the modelling and the expression of the features, which it is impossible to show in the placid countenance of the teacher himself. The Shin-bin-thah-young very often have the emblems of the Shway-zet-daw carved on the soles of the feet.

Finally there is the Mat-tat-kodaw, or erect image, also called Mat-yat-daw, where the master is represented in the attitude of preaching, the right hand elevated, but still with the same calm, unmoved visage. These Mat-yat-daw are usually very large, and are far more common in the temples of Upper Burma than in the bell-pagodas of the low country. They are often Sapoopatee Payah, representing the Budh as a king with crown on head and the royal wings on arms and thighs. They are usually very large, like the recumbent figure. The standing figures in the Ananda at Pagahn must be over forty feet in height, and form a very impressive sight. Light sufficient to illuminate the whole figure cannot be admitted at the comparatively low gateways of the shrine. Cunning architects have therefore cut slits far up in the chapel roof, and a narrow stream of light falls full on the gilded face of the Buddha. The effect is most solemn and awe-inspiring.

The devotee passes through long dim corridors, where his foot falls soft on the mouldy pavement, and the smell is as of a charnel-house, and there is silence throughout the whole vast temple, broken fitfully by the eerie chant of a fellow-worshipper far away through the passages, and suddenly he comes on the chapel and sees before him the sad tranquil face, with a glory shed over it, and the hand stretched out as if in warning or benediction. One can then understand how it is that many of the ignorant and uninstructed do actually worship the Gautama as if it were an idol, and the Englishman involuntarily takes off his hat as he enters the sanctuary.

The statues in the great lonely fanes at Pagahn are certainly far more impressive than those in the smaller but more gaily-decked-out niche-shrines of the solid pyramidal pagodas of Lower Burma. The four great Mat-yat-daw in the Ananda Payah represent the four great Buddhas of this world-cycle. Kauk-kathan, as the first law-giver, is placed in the east; Gawnagohng in the southern image chamber; Kathapa to the west, and the Buddha of the present religious period in the northern shrine. Kauk-kathan is made of the sweet-scented dan-sa-goo tree; Gawnagohng of jasmine wood; Kathapa of brass, and Gautama of fir; but they have all been covered with plaster and gilt, and the material of which they are made is only known by tradition. An especially favourite figure to represent standing is Deebinkayah Payah, the fourth of the twenty-eight Buddhas whose names are recorded as appearing in successively destroyed worlds. It was this Buddha, the "Light-bringer," who first announced to Shin Gautama that he, then a fervent yahan, would hereafter, after many worlds, attain the supreme wisdom.

The temples of Pagahn and other places in Independent territory are built specially for the reception of great

images, and as the public zeal is concentrated on these, there are comparatively few surplus figures, and these mostly scattered along the sides of the dim corridors. In Lower Burma, however, where the sacred buildings are more particularly relic shrines, the images are more of an adjunct to the payah, and there is a most extraordinary multiplication of them. In each of the four image chambers round the base of the pagoda, besides the chief figure there are numbers of other Buddhas of all sizes, and these overflow into dozens of tazoungs, or image houses, all round about the central payah. This reserve stock is due to the unceasing desire for koothoh. If a man cannot build a pagoda, or has not money enough to erect a monastery or a rest-house, there is at any rate no one so poor but he can gain merit by dedicating a Gautama; and so images of brass and marble, plaster and wood, and sun-dried clay, flow in a never-ending stream to the great district shrines. There has long ceased to be any room for them except in the image-houses, and there they remain, but seldom visited by any but the very religious, and gradually becoming grimed and mouldy with age, notwithstanding the Yay-thohn-pwè at the new year, when the women come and wash them down. It is a maxim that devotions may and ought to be repeated before every image, but it is not often that a worshipper is seen in the tazoungs, and the offerings of candles and incense sticks, flowers, and pouk-pouk san-pan, are few and far between. Nevertheless the houses are crammed with figures of all sizes, from huge ten feet high Sagaing marbles down to little clay painted and gilt specimens that you can put in your pocket, and that idolatry-detesting Britishers often do so serve and afterwards exhibit as having actually "been worshipped." Big and small, they are crowded together as close as they can be, the small

ones reposing in the hand or the lap, or round about the sides of their bigger facsimiles. Sometimes, as is the case in a great long building at the Kyaik-than-lan Payah at Maulmein, the centre is occupied by a gigantic recumbent figure, the tin-myin-kway being placed in orderly array all round the sides facing the central dying Budh. Sometimes the figures stand side by side on steps rising one above the other with a small open space in the middle. The halls are always quite full, the most recently erected being apparently just spacious enough to hold all the images ready to put into it.

Few statues stand unprotected in the open. At Kyouk-ta-ran, on the Irrawaddy a few miles below Prome, there are a number of Gautamas cut out of the rocky face of a bluff overhanging the river. The ridge is about eighty feet high altogether, and the figures are thirty feet above the level of the water. They are all honestly cut out of the rock, and not, as some people think, simply brick and plaster erections—an idea induced by the habit of painting them white, or covering them with gold leaf, occasionally indulged in by people anxious of bettering their chance towards a new existence. There are about fifty of them altogether, varying very considerably in size, some being very large. A similar work may be seen on the hill side above Sagaing, opposite Ava. There the Buddhas, each in his separate niche, are carved at regular intervals, and the rock face sweeps round in a segment of a circle, the platform in front being strongly built up with a masonry revetment.

On the opposite side of the river, near the village of Sa-gyeen-wah, formerly a suburb of the old capital, Amarapoora, is a gigantic sedent figure built perfectly open and uncovered. It is situated close to the half-mile-long wooden bridge which crosses the lagoon there, and the Budh gazes across the waters with eternal meditative

smile. Round about are ranged double and treble circles of pigmy Zaydee-yan, over which it towers to a height of ninety feet or more. The neighbourhood is practically deserted now that Mandalay has become the capital. There are almost no worshippers of the giant Buddha except the small colony of monks from the kyoung hard by. The birds will drop seeds between the crevices of the bricks and plaster, and another decade will probably see the great image torn out of all possibility of recognition.

Such a phenomenon actually does exist near the ancient Pegu town of Zaing-ga-naing, on the opposite side of the river from the capital of the old Peguan kings. One of the singular pyramidal limestone rocks, common in the Tenasserim Province, has been built with the aid of bricks into the form of an enormous Gautama. On the top of the head, glinting white through the trees, appears the slender spire of a small pagoda. The jungle growth has spread all over the hill, or image, and the outline and features of the Budh struggle to be seen through a heavy fog of varied green. Such monster images exist here and there all over the Eastern districts. They are all exceedingly ancient, and are regarded more as glorifications of the great master than as recognised places for devotion. The pious deposit offerings and chant their sentences before them as they do everywhere before the features of the Buddha, but otherwise the people regard them more with the curiosity of the foreigner than with the adoration of the devotee.

Among the more ignorant and superstitious classes it is not at all uncommon to find particular images regarded with especial awe and reverence, on account of the tale of some prodigy displayed. The sacred order and all true Buddhists however strenuously discountenance the idea of any miracles being wrought either by particular images or by holy relics. It is for this reason that the latter are in

Burma all walled up and not brought out for the inspection of worshippers as in other Buddhist countries. The Kamma-wah-sah in its denunciation of the claiming of magic powers is also considered to forbid the assertion that any particular statue displays more than usual power—a power which could not fail to lead directly to idolatry. The passage runs as follows: "No brother must arrogate to himself what goes beyond the power of human nature, and he must not boast of exceptional abilities. Whoso gives out with evil intentions that he possesses supernatural powers, saying that he has attained zahn, or neh'ban, or command of religion, or undisturbed repose on the path that leads to the deliverance; he is no Sramana; he is no son of Sakya. As a broken palm-tree cannot be again united, as a twig broken from the stem cannot be joined on again, so is that religious man, who falsely declares that he has attained the superhuman, fallen away from the true Sramanas, separated from the sons of Sakya. So long as life lasts must this be avoided."

Nevertheless unprincipled yahans, fearing that the piety of their district is growing slack, or wishing to attract benevolent pilgrims to their neighbourhood, undoubtedly do occasionally originate, or at any rate stimulate, the belief in prodigies. A common wonder is that of the Tat-daw pwah, growing images. I am not aware that they are made of meteoric stones or any such substance. The carnal and unregenerate are wont to assert that these images only grow at night and then in sudden jumps. In any case, they never grow very big.

A more unusual miraculous discovery actually resulted in the growth of a small fishing village into a prosperous town, and, owing to this latter circumstance, into the head of one of the sub-divisions under the British Government. This is the station of Myan-oung on the Irrawaddy. A

Gautama rose out of the ground there. That was however not the wonder. It perspired! It perspired a thick, sticky exudation which precluded the necessity of using the milky juice of the tha-pan thee (*Ficus racemosa*), the gum usually employed in fixing gold leaf on the images or pagodas. The tidings soon spread far and wide, and people journeyed from distant towns to see the wonder and to plaster on fabulous quantities of gold leaf. The hamlet rapidly grew into a town. The surrounding country was taken up and cultivated, and Myan-oung is now as pretty a little station as any you will see on the great Irrawaddy, and is one of the principal centres of the great Henzadah district.

Another little fishing village, farther down the river, below Maoobin, possessed in 1879 a singular image. This Buddha in most unusual fashion suddenly began to develop a moustache. It was not much to speak of, and was certainly not pretty, but there was undoubtedly a growth of some kind on the upper lip. The phenomenon however never had more than an exceedingly local interest. A moustache is not an appendage that appeals to a Burman's finer feelings to any great extent, and if Shin Gautama had one in life he would certainly have shaved it off. Therefore the swampy, mosquito-haunted district failed to better its fortunes. A good many people came and gazed on the ugly bristles and made offerings, but they went away again, and the enthusiasm was strangled before it was well born. The military extra assistant commissioner of the district declared in an off-hand way that it was a fungus of a new kind, or some hitherto undiscovered lichen, and had thoughts of chipping a bit of the lip off and sending it to the British Museum. But he refrained, and the villagers missed even this poor chance of notoriety.

There are a few images specially noteworthy with less questionable reason. One of these stands half way up

Mandalay Hill under a lofty teak tectum. It is a gigantic standing image profusely gilt all over, and pointing with steadfast finger full at the glittering central spire of the palace rising gracefully over the throne of the Ruler of Existence. As a half-way house on the toilsome ascent of the hill it is always frequented, but the superstitious wayfarers gaze through the gilt railings more with the awe due to the guardian spirit of the capital than with the fervency of the worshipper.

In the chapel on the summit of the hill, looking over the wide, fertile plain towards the black, jagged Nat's Peak, haunted by goblins and wraiths, the silver windings of the mighty Irrawaddy and the barren pagoda-sprinkled Sagaing hills beyond, there is a singular statue. A notice begs the religious to put their gold leaf, not indiscriminately all over the figure, but only on the eyeballs. The zeal of many years causes the pupils to start from their sockets as if the Buddha were horrified by some gruesome deed of sin perpetrated in the golden city below. The last time I was there I heard a matter-of-fact Briton marvelling how it was that the goodly nuggets had not long since been removed by a sacrilegious hand. It seems to be always Englishmen who think of these things first.

A hundred yards from the foot of the sacred hill in a tall brick building is a great marble Buddha, probably the biggest monolith in the world. The sitting figure must be quite twenty-five feet high, and scores of tons weight. It does the Mandalay workmen great credit that with their primitive appliances they should have been able to mount so ponderous a figure on its pedestal. In a wide square round about are arranged little six-foot shrines, each containing a gilt image and all looking towards the central Buddha. It is not the least wonderful of the many wonderful things to be seen round the foot of Mandalay Hill.

The casting of a brass image is a public festival, and the scene of general rejoicing. The people gather from miles round about, and there are plays and feastings for several nights, whether the Buddha is presented by an individual or by public subscription. The whole assemblage takes an interest in the proceedings, and rejoices in proportion to the success of the casting, which is effected in the same way as with bells. When the image is finished and ready to be dedicated, a great procession is formed; a band of music and dancers go at the head; the most wealthy men deem it an honour to be allowed to bear a hand in carrying the statue; men, women, and children from all the surrounding country, dressed in their gayest clothes, follow on foot or in brightly decorated bullock carts to the bottom of the pagoda steps. Then the Buddha is carried up and solemnly deposited in the allotted place, myatta-thappè, in religious phraseology, a term not to be rendered without many words in English. It includes all the meanings of seemliness, dignity, beauty, splendour, and awe-compelling majesty. The ritual of the monks at the consecration of an image is, as in the case of the dedication of a pagoda, vague, and decided by individual opinion. Such a formal presentation service is called Nay-ka-zah, and is declared by the Soola-gandee sect to be superfluous. The lineaments of the Budh are worthy of honour wherever seen, at the pagoda or in the workman's shop.

The figures of Shin Gautama are not in themselves by any means handsome as works of art. The national skill in wood-carving is well known, and the little wooden lay figures made at Henzadah and other places are remarkably clever in their variety of expression. None of this skill appears in the religious images. The modeller or sculptor is held fast by ancient custom. He must make his image of a particular pattern and with the recognised expression.

The object is to portray the death of all human passions and earthly feelings. The calm, eternal sleep-like smile symbolises the attainment of neh'ban, the cessation of being, the end of the cycles of transincorporation of souls. This is all that is intended to be represented, and it is held out as a hope to the struggling sinner among earthly miseries. The model to be followed would be worthless did the face express the hopes and fears and pleasures of wretched mortality.

The following triumphal song is taken from the same play of Sawpay Sawmay as the chant in celebration of the gilding of the Pegu pagoda, and is set to the same Yohdaya nan-thehn than. The Mahah Myat-munee is the "Arakan Pagoda" in Mandalay.

ON THE IMAGE PRESENTED BY THE PEGU INSPECTOR TO THE MAHAH MYAT-MUNEE.

Fair springs the sun at dawning
From out the forest's green,
The nine gems on his nat-front
Shine gloriously at e'en.

The rainbow weaves nat-raiment,
Sweet is the lily's breath,
The malla flower is winsome,
That weeps the Saddan's[1] death.

But fairer is the image
That Hanthawadee sends,
Amid its gold and silver
The pearl with ruby blends.

The maiden from her finger
Drew off her jewelled rings,
The men brought costly diamonds
And wealth of precious things,

[1] The Saddan is the White Elephant, the last incarnation of Shin Gautama before he was conceived in Queen Maia's womb.

And as 'mid shouts and clangour
The flames leapt red as gold
All joyous cast their treasures
Into the hissing mould.

So high hath Buddha honour
In Hanthawâdee's soil,
So gladly seek believers
Release from earthly toil.

First great Sandathooreeya[1]
The Master's features wrought,
He sought the Budh's permission,
Nor failed in what he sought.

And I, the poor Inspector,
Fired by as holy zeal,
Present a copied image
And trust for equal weal.

That 'tis a precious alms-gift
Great prodigies attest,
The Buddha's sixfold glory
Gleams nightly on its crest,

And when as it was casting
Byammahs and nats untold
Came down and cast rich offerings
Into the holy mould.

Yea, myriads of all creatures
From every earthly seat
Rejoicing cast their alms-gifts
Before the Buddha's feet.

With close-clasped hands men bowed them,
With fervent minds they prayed,
That Buddha some great token
Might grant them for their aid.

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[1] The King Sandathooreeya, while the Buddha was yet alive, obtained his permission to make a statue of him. This image is the great twelve-foot high brass Tin-myin-kway, now the chief centre of worship in the Mahah Myat-mûnee shrine.

Then from the lordly image,
Aglow with brilliant light,
There streamed both fire and water
Upon their dazzled sight,

And diamond rays and ruby,
The Six great Glories blaze,
The Buddha's Nine great Splendours
Blind their adoring gaze.

There's many a goodly image
In Mahah Myat-munee,
But Mamyay[1] shall be aged
Ere it a fairer see.

And I, the great Inspector,
May lay me down in peace,
For when this life is ended
Existences shall cease.

It is a very usual practice at the casting of bells and images for the on-lookers to throw gold and silver articles of jewellery into the ladles of melted ore.

[1] Mamyay is a common poetical contraction for Mandalay. Man is also frequently used.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BELLS.

"THIS Bell is made by Koo-na-lin-gala, the priest—and weight 600 viss. No one body design to destroy this Bell. Maulmein, March 30th, 1855. He who destroyed to this Bell, they must be in the great Heell, and unable to coming out."

This inscription runs round the rim of the great bell at the Kyaik-than-lan pagoda at Maulmein. It is hardly a fiftieth part of the Mahah Ganda at Rangoon, which, in turn, is a great deal smaller than the huge monster at Mengohn, near Mandalay; but it is noticeable as being the only bell in Burma, as far as I am aware, which has an English inscription on it. The circumstance is scarcely to be considered in the light of a compliment, for the bell has not the character of exceptional sanctity, and there is a lengthy Pali inscription on the upper part giving further particulars, and commending the pious donors to the safe keeping of the five thousand nats who guard the faith, the tutelary nats of the universe, the nats of the earth, the air, the forest, and the city; but there is nothing whatever in the shape of menaces to such as may have evil designs on the bell. Koo-na-lin-gala, the priest, however, no doubt thought this English addition very necessary and by no

means unwarranted; for only two years before, after the conclusion of the second Burmese war, in 1853, the British troops had tried to carry off the sacred Shway Dagohn bell, and had gone the length of getting it on board of a ship. Unfortunately the vessel turned over, and Mahah Ganda, the "great sweet voice," was capsized into the mud at the bottom of the Rangoon river. The good mendicant, therefore, who superintended the casting of the bell for the Maulmein payah, doubtless thought that none but the utmost terrors would serve to scare off the sacrilegious Briton, and therefore it is with punishment in awidzee, the lowest of the eight chambers of hell, ordinarily reserved for parricides, assaulters of an ascetic, and railers at the Buddha, that all who may meditate harm to the Kyaik-than-lan bell are threatened. The fiery monk may rest happy. The bell has hung unmolested from the big crossbar, resting on its two huge teak uprights, and will doubtless long remain safe on the somewhat cramped platform at the end of the Toung Ngyoh range.

The love of bells in Burma is somewhat remarkable. Every large pagoda has some dozens of them, of all sizes, hanging round the skirts of the zaydee, the image houses, and sacred posts. One or two were put up with the central shrine itself; others have been added at various times by the religious. Most of them have long Pali inscriptions on them recording the praises of the Lord and the aspirations of the giver. Here and there are a few with Burmese dedications, presented by poor, simple, jungle people, the monks in whose district did not know Pali, or had the grace to say they were not learned enough to write an original composition in that language. Every Burman has learned a certain number of Pali formulæ to enable him to worship at the pagoda, but few even of the most renowned sadaws have anything like a thorough

knowledge of the sacred language. Hence, when there is a modest monk in the kyoung, the simple cultivators have to fall back on their own vernacular, and produce plaintive appeals like the following:—

"This bell was moulded with great care and much expense, and is humbly offered by Moung San Yah, of the hamlet of Nga-pay-oh, in the township of Maoobin, and Mahmah Gyee, his wife, who seek refuge in the boundless mercy of the pitiful Buddha, in the majesty of the eternal Law, and in the example of the venerable Assembly of the Perfect, the three gems. They visit the precious things faithfully on the appointed days. Applaud, ye pious! They humbly strive to gain for themselves merit. May the good nats who guard the forest and the field look smilingly on them and protect the poor man's crops. May the nats who dwell in the air and the earth defend from evil creatures the two fat bullocks which plough the fields. May the guardian nats of the house and the city keep from harm Chit Oo, their son, and little Mah Mee, their darling daughter. And may the merit of this offering be shared with their children and with all living beings. May the excellent Lord pity them, the good spirits smile on them, the holy assembly receive them. So shall Moung San Yah and Mahmah Gyee gain much merit and rejoice in presenting this bell. Weight, seventy-five viss."

Such dedications are found here and there, but they are not common, for half the honour of presenting the bell is lost if the common crowd can read what is written on it; and doubtless Moung Chit Oo, when he has been to an English school, and has got a place under Government, or in an English merchant's office, will be rather ashamed of the quaint humility of his father's offering.

The bells are not intended to summon worshippers to

their devotions. There is no necessity for such a call where there is no formal service. Every man is responsible to himself only for his religious state; no one else has anything directly to do with him, or can give him help. The monks themselves display but little concern in the spiritual state of the laity. If a man is to attain a favourable change in a succeeding existence, it must be by his own exertions. He knows the regular duty-days, and on these and on the special feast-days he goes to gain koothoh for himself and better his chance towards a new trans-incorporation. If he is a fond man, he parcels out the merit acquired by his devotions among those members of his family or friends who have not been to the pagoda. The use of the bells is to direct attention to the fact of the lauds of the Buddha having been recited. The worshipper, when he has finished, goes to one of the bells and strikes it three times, to bring to the notice of the guardian spirits and the four worlds what he has been doing. There are always a number of deers' antlers and billets of wood lying near the bell for this purpose. None of them have clappers, and metal is not used to strike them. There is no objection whatever to a non-Buddhist striking the bell; it is indeed rather a kindly action, for the more clangour there is the more likely the nats are to observe the devotions going on. Most of the bells have a fine tone, and a flick with the finger is sufficient to cause a vibration through the whole twenty-five tons of metal in Mahah Ganda. What sound the Mengohn bell, second only in size to that presented by the Empress Catherine to Moscow, is capable of producing, will never, probably, be known, for the supports have given way, and half of the rim rests on the ground. But, as Colonel Yule says, it would have at any time required a battering ram to bring out its music.

Besides those suspended round the precincts of the

payah, the htee, or umbrella, on the top of the edifice, is always hung with a multitude of bells. Those on the more sacred shrines are very often entirely gold or silver. Several on the Shway Dagohn are of gold, studded with precious stones, and are worth many hundred pounds sterling apiece. These, of course, are furnished with tongues, and the slightest breeze causes a constant harmonious tinkling, dear to the worshipper's heart. The object of these bells is identical with that of those below on the platform—to attract the attention of the good spirits in Tawa-dehntha, and other abodes of the nat-dewahs on Mount Myemmoh.

Though the bells are very well moulded, the mode of casting them is of the most primitive possible character. A mould of clay is formed to represent the inside. This is covered with bees'-wax to the proposed thickness of the metal, and over this again is placed a heavy layer of clay, mixed with chopped paddy straw. Through this outer covering there are a number of funnel holes in parallel rings at distances of six or nine inches, and through these the molten metal is poured in, melting and taking the place of the bees'-wax, which flows out at the bottom. Straws inserted through the clay let out the air and steam. Thus the bell is formed in a series of rings one above the other. The copper and tin are melted together in small open-air furnaces round about, and the crucibles are carried in little wicker baskets. Large bells usually are made in a pit dug in the ground. The metal images of the Buddha for the pagodas are cast in a similar way. When the mass has cooled, the outside is polished, and any flaws there may be are patched up. Then the inscription is chiselled on, and the bell is solemnly dedicated.

The casting is made quite as much a ceremony as it used to be in the Middle Ages in Europe. The whole district

gathers to see the operation. Songs are sung, and bands clash and play while the actual casting is going on, and sometimes the vast multitude is wrought up to such a state of enthusiasm that women and children throw in their necklaces, and gold and silver rings and bangles. Traces of these are to be seen in the inside of many bells, in the shape of whitish or yellow streaks. The workmen sometimes, in the case of large bells, try to strengthen them by twisting iron chains round the inner mould in the midst of the bees'-wax. Such a chain cable is distinctly to be seen in the great ninety-ton Mengohn bell. Since the "Great Monarch" of Moscow became a chapel, this is actually the biggest bell in the world.

The shape of Burmese bells is not handsome. They come straight down to the mouth like a barrel—not expanding at the rim, like those of European make, but their tone is very sweet. In Burma bells are entirely reserved for pagodas. A Burman never has a bell in his house; and it would, in fact, be no use to him there if he had it. Englishmen do not use them either, so that throughout the whole country the bell is only used for sacred purposes.

The following is a translation of the inscription on the bell numbered 15219 in the Indian section of the South Kensington Museum:—

"The Victor, the All-gracious" [referring to Gautama, the Lord Buddha].

"The gist of the discourse on worship, as it appears in the beginning of the Dhamma-set, is as follows:—One must give goods in alms; one must preach the Law: these two things are good deeds both for this world and for the next; they lead into the four meggas and the four palin-sahs, the paths by which a man may pass to neh'ban. Without charity you cannot attain to neh'ban; so it is written in

the Pali, in the texts, the Tagatah and the Teegah, and the commentaries on these sacred books.

"A seemly place is this, a goodly and far-famed place [the shrine where the bell was set up], renowned throughout the four systems of ten thousand worlds, among the Nat-dewahs, the Athooras, the Byammahs, the Thagyahs, the Nagahs, the Gohnba Yekkhas [the guardians of the Thagyah realms], and all such beings to whom reverence may be paid.

"The Pagahn Min [who was deposed during the second Burmese war in 1852, and died of small-pox in 1880], who has received the divine authority, the king of this country, gave to me, as to one of his pages to whom he gives commands, the title of Mahah Min-goung Kyaw Din, because I was an old and true servant of his, listening reverently to all his commands; this title he gave me with power over three districts, with mercy abundant, like the earth and all the precious things.

"I, the giver of the bell, the famous man, the Yaywoon Min, was staying in the sweet-smelling town of Ma-oo, of which I collect the revenue for the king, and with me was my wife, my life's breath, Meh Shway Gohn, like to the pollen of a lily, from whom I will not be separated in all the existences to come, out of which we hope soon to escape, and therefore we give praises now in order to advance in the Meggas and the Poh [the four great attainments]; we adore before the Lord Buddha that we may embark on the golden raft of the noble path which will conduct us to the final plunge into neh'ban; we two, brother and sister [commonly used for husband and wife], have given this bell as an offering to the seven precious things.

"The exact weight of the bell in current reckoning is 2,500 kyats weight. In this attempt to merit neh'ban our method was as follows:—we took our own weight in

gold and in silver and bought copper and other metal [lawbah, the Pali word used, implies *five* metals—gold, silver, copper, iron, and lead], and mixed them well together.

"In the year 1209 [1847 A.D.], in the hot season, at a fortunate hour, I had it moulded, setting my heart on giving it in alms. As I wrote this inscription I offered up abundant prayer that no enemies or troubles might come nigh me, and that I might obtain neh'ban. Then I dedicated it.

"Now will I record all the alms which I gave and erected within the sacred enclosure of the pagoda, round the slender spire. I gave a tagohn-deing, the price of which, with all incidental expenses in putting up and everything, was five hundred rupees; that was the alms exactly. At the foot of the tagohn-deing I built four small pagodas, making bold to offer them in alms. In addition to these I built, outside the pagoda enclosure, a monastery and a rest-house. I, the Yaywoon Min, wished earnestly to give the greatest alms of any in fragrant Ma-oo-myo, of which I collected the taxes. I, the Yaywoon Min, and my wife, my sons and my daughters, the four chief parties, together with my servants and slaves [presented these things]. I persuaded them all to give alms that they might attain to neh'ban, the deliverance; that they might prepare for themselves the way, difficult and full of swirling eddies. Let the four congregations—let men, nat-dewahs, and all creatures, unite in praise.

"Such are all my offerings; these alms dedicated all together, in order to gain merit, to rise and progress to neh'ban—to the world just before it [the last of corporeal lives]. May I be freed from the four states of punishment; the three great kaps [fighting, famine, and plague]; the eight evil places, from which a man is born blind,

dumb, and otherwise crippled; from the five enemies; from unfortunate times and seasons; from bad-intentioned people; may I escape all these when I die. When new glories wake up, I will give praise; in the king's palace, the golden dwelling where the king lives; I will ponder well and chant aloud the praise of faith. Very high, even to the skies, rises the pagoda given in alms by the Ma-oo revenue collector, the Yaywoon Min payah, the pious founder. All men and nat-dewahs, when they behold it, will cry out eagerly in praise, they will shout thah-doo [well done, thou good and faithful servant], with united, limitless clamour.

"The good that I have done in this world; all the alms that I have given [may they be for the benefit of] my parents, teachers, cousins, and all my relations; all who in Zampoo-deepa are kings of the earth, all queens, their sons and daughters; nobles and all men of rank, officers, and all people of the earth in the thirty-one seats of the world. All the merits I have gained, may they be shared with these. I give them and share them freely. The alms are manifest. I have given them. This good work, when I forget it [*i.e.* in my next life], may it be counted to me in the time of the Buddha Areemadehya, when he is revealed. The friendly witnessing nats will bear testimony, as they wring the water from their streaming hair."

The allusion to the witnessing spirits refers to the Mathohndayay nats who testified that Shin Gautama was the true Buddha. Mahn Nat, the spirit of evil, came and claimed the throne under the Bawdee-bin as his, and appealed to all his countless retinue as witnesses that he was the true Buddha, and the rightful possessor of the throne. They replied with a great shout. The Lord Buddha had no one to call in evidence but the earth,

and to it he addressed himself. The earth replied with a violent quaking and a roar that scared away all Mahn Nat's noisy host. The Mathohndayay nats stand as representatives of the evil, and it is to gain their testimony that a cup of water is always poured out whenever an offering is made. Hence their wet hair. At the Shway Zee-Gohn pagoda between Nyoung-oo and Pagahn, the Mathohndayay nats are represented under umbrellas and with books. Their images almost always display them wringing the water out of their long tresses.

The small bell in the South Kensington Museum, in the case close by the larger one, bears the following inscription:—"In the month of Tabohdwè [February], on the fifth of the waning moon, in the year 1204 [1842 A.D.], on a Sunday at about four in the afternoon, this bell was cast and moulded of pure copper. Its weight is 594049 kyats [this is an absurd mis-statement, or a gross piece of flattery to the king]. There are four lions on the hanging apparatus. Its height is nine fingers' breadths; the diameter five inches; the circumference fifteen; the thickness twenty-four (lines?). It is called the Mahahtee Thadda Ganda (the great, sweet sound). The man who had this royal bell moulded was the Burman king Tharrawaddy, Kohn-Boung Min."

CHAPTER XIX.

A PAGODA FEAST.

A PAGODA feast in Burma is one of the most frequent, as well as one of the most picturesque sights in the country. Each shrine has its own special sacred day; and the annual celebration of it is made the occasion of a general picnic, the congregation of people, from all parts of the surrounding districts, being bent no less on pleasure than on pious observances. Reverence for the shrines of various saints in different parts of Europe gave rise to the great fairs which were general until the end of last century, and survive even now in out-of-the-way places. Doubtless, if the Burmese were a commercial people, and cared for the putting together of pieces of silver, these gatherings might degenerate into occasions of barter and bickerings of trade—just as, if they were a practical people, their zaht-pwè might blossom into something of a more realcharacter, as the old mystery and morality plays gave birth to the modern drama of Europe. But the Burmese do not care for any of these things; and the pagoda festivals retain therefore the character they have always had, of ostensible religious assemblies. Still their most obvious characteristic to the ordinary public mind is very different. Youths and girls look forward to them as

seasons of mirth and flirtation: long nights at the open-air theatre, feastings and perpetual amusements, the pleasanter because lasting no more than a couple of days. Elderly people have no less liking for them. They meet their old friends, and receive and recount the gossip of half a dozen districts; and there is always a succession of new acquaintances. It is a joyous holiday; and it is sanctified by the thought that the few hours spent at the payah gather up stores of koothoh, not less certainly profitable than the social delights of the "duty day" are pleasurable.

The greatest of all the pagoda feasts is, of course, that of the Shway Dagohn in Rangoon, with its pilgrims, not only from the farthest parts of Burma, and far-away Shan hills, but also from over the seas, from Siam and Cambodia and the Corea. But the vastness of the gathering and the proximity of the great town spoil the national character of the festival, and introduce too many elements of nineteenth-century civilisation in the shape of merry-go-rounds and hack carriages. A "jungle" feast is not only more characteristic, but more appreciated in its way by both town and country folk.

There are three old Talaing pagodas near Rangoon, Kyaik-ka-san, Kyaik-ka-lo, and Kyaik-weing, whose annual duty days are looked forward to with pleasure by all the people round about. The feasts all occur in the month of Ta-bo-dwè, corresponding to our February or March. I have a suspicion that, were the proper date adhered to, all three would have the same ooboh-nay; but such a lavish squandering of the good a popular religion provides for us would hardly meet with lay approval, even if advocated by the most holy of hermits. Accordingly the three pagoda days occur at intervals of a week, without reference to the crescent or waning moon; and latterly,

with singular convenience for Burmans occupied in business in Rangoon, have usually been fixed for Sunday; so that English merchants are not troubled with the sudden ailments of their clerks at this season so much as used formerly to be the case. The Kyaik-ka-san is probably the most sacred of the three; containing as it does a tooth and bone of the forehead of Shin Gautama, brought to Rangoon by a yahanda, a blameless mendicant, over whose remains in Rangoon a huge thehn-gyee, or ceremonial building, has been erected. Kyaik-ka-lo is, however, seemingly the more popular. It stands on the summit of a little hill about fourteen miles north of Rangoon, and is built of laterite blocks, now faced with bricks covered with plaster. The shrine was built in the second century before Christ, and, ninety feet high itself, is surrounded by twenty-four smaller zaydee-yan of a much later date.

Great crowds of people go out every year from Rangoon, starting early in the morning, so as to avoid the heat, though in February the bracing winds of the cold weather have not altogether gone. Most of the travelling is done in bullock carts. These conveyances are not nearly so fine as the Mandalay vehicles, but they are neat enough; the pole is elaborately carved at the end, and above all they are roomy, and allow "Jack Burma" and his family to loll about as they please. Bamboos are bent over to form a hood, and over this is thrown a kullagah, a piece of tapestry-work formed of pieces of many-coloured cloth sewn on to a red blanket so as to represent figures; the scenes being usually taken from some well-known play or from the court. They are eight or ten feet long, and four or five broad, affording a capital shelter from the sun, and combining the advantage of being easily moved when there is a breeze, with the still greater merit of looking very gay and bright. The party starts off before

daylight, young master Loo-galay being left behind to guard the house till the rest come back, and testifying his disapproval of the responsibility of this duty by strenuous howls. The Madrasi sepoy lines are soon passed, and we get out into the undulating country beyond, and pass through the gardens and orchards which abound along the Prome road. The ground here is not suited for rice, and there are large areas covered with mango, jack, ma-yan, a kind of acid plum (which the perverse Englishman persists in calling Mary-Anne), and other fruit-trees, with pine-apples in long rows beneath their shade. The Chinese have great market gardens here, miracles of neatness, but far from savoury in their odours. They never miss a chance of making money, and accordingly this morning turn over a few pice by selling sugar-cane to the girls, and bamboo pipes of palm-toddy to the men. The Shans, also born gardeners, to whom the fruit-trees mostly belong, are very pious, and join in the pilgrimage with their quaint offering-flags made of slim frameworks of bamboo, woven across in diverse patterns with vari-coloured cotton threads. A little farther on we get beyond the region of the toungya gardens, and pass between monotonous stretches of secondary jungle with no houses to be seen, though behind the strip of tangled bush there are wide expanses of rice-land with little bamboo huts dotted here and there in clusters. But the sun is getting high, and about half-way on the journey, old Moung Gyee declares he is hungry, and draws up the cart under a bank in a shady hollow. The bullocks are turned loose, and preparations made for breakfast. The entire house service has been brought with us. It is not very extensive, certainly. A couple of earthen pots with covers, and a flat wooden spoon to stir up the rice or curry; a ladle made of half a cocoa-nut, with a handle in it; a big round, flat dish of plain lacquered

wood to place the entire feast on when it is ready; and a few bamboo, lacquered cups, without handles, with perhaps a plate or two, complete the list. The provender is equally simple. A heap of plain boiled rice, dried fish, chillies, onions, nga-pee, some salt and oil—that is the sum total. But it is eaten with zest and good appetite, and the little stream furnishes wherewith to wash it down. Then the ladies produce cheroots for the party from the recesses of their bamboo plaited pahs, and light up for everybody if they are good-natured.

Numbers of other carts have come up and stopped or passed on in the meantime, and, hilarious with his breakfast, Moung Gyee challenges neighbour Oo Hpay to a race; and forthwith the bullocks are brought into a shambling trot, and amidst much prodding with sticks and cries of "Hé noa" and "Tun-n-ng," and other sounds understanded of cattle, a fairly level race is kept up for half a mile or so. Then the carts are pulled up, and their inmates burst into loud talk, having been hitherto precluded from expressing their triumph or chagrin from a fear of biting their tongues off in the jolting, or of being choked with the dust. Notes are compared as to who is coming and who has stayed away, and then fresh acquaintances are sighted in the passing throng; and so with much good humour and pleasant meetings the fourteen-mile journey is safely got over. Arrived at the zayat, the rest-house, which marks the point whence the path to the shrine strikes off from the highway, the cart is turned aside among the low bushes; the oxen are cast off and tethered up, and mats and bedding spread out below the cart in readiness against bed-time. Then our party breaks up to seek friends in the crowd; the girls taking off their travelling-dress and putting on their finest tamehns, an operation which it would puzzle English women to do in

public with equally scanty raiment and equal modesty. But they do it deftly; and, after touching up their complexion with a little fragrant thana'kha, are off, followed shortly by their brothers, who, in the absence of a looking-glass, have some difficulty in winding on their turbans to their liking. However, that is eventually done, and the remaining hours of daylight are spent in pleasant talk with friends, and wanderings through the shrub-growth and tall grass which cover the spur, at the end of which is the pagoda. The little tank, a brick-built pond, which lies at the foot of the hollow, falling away from the monastery, is a great rendezvous, and many of the older people climb the slope to have some talk with the abbot.

At nightfall there is a general gathering in the cleared space where the stage for the puppet-play is erected. The monks of the kyoung are not Soola-gandees, and do not prohibit the acting of a play so near to the sacred precincts. Besides, it is the Waythandaya Woottoo, one of the ten greatest birth-stories; and there is a troupe of famous manipulators from Rangoon. The marionette play is more esteemed by the people than the legitimate drama, and it is more suited to the neighbourhood of the relic-shrine. Nevertheless, a zaht-pwè, got up by the amateur actors and actresses of the village of San-gyee-wah, a mile back on the road, is also well patronised, so that all tastes are consulted.

The people sit round about in a dense crowd, smoking and chewing betel, many of the young men strolling about and flirting in the impromptu bazaar which some business-like girls have started. This goes on till daylight, the audience alternately sleeping and looking on and applauding. At early dawn, the offerings are made to the yahans, and all crowd to the shrine to recite their sentences in praise of the Lord Buddha. After breakfast there is more gossip and conversation with friends. A few of the

old people listen to the reading and expounding of the Law by the superior of the monastery, but the young continue the amusements of the day before. The cool of the evening, or the following morning at latest, sees all on their way home again, the fun being kept up with, if anything, increased zest. Every one is in high spirits. There has been much merit gained by the pilgrimage, and the personal enjoyment of the trip has been no less satisfactory. Gay turbans are hung up as flags from the carts, and songs and choruses are frequent and jovial. Many a marriage is settled at these pious picnics. There is such abundant opportunity for love-making at the open-air encampment, where the old people are so engaged in talking with relations and friends whom they have not seen for the last twelve months, that they forget how craftily they utilised similar opportunities when they were young themselves. Besides, at the end of February, Lent is beginning to loom up, and in Lent nobody can be married, and those girls who do not care for the watery courtship of the New Year's Feast in April are often induced to be complaisant at the country pagoda feasts. Many a young couple have special cause to remember the happy ride back. The Buddhist faith may be as dreary, without hope, without belief in the world, as many say it is, but no one would imagine it so who looks on the gaily-dressed laughing crowd of men and maidens who throng to the country pagoda feasts.

CHAPTER XX.

DUTY DAYS.

THERE are four ooboh-nay, or duty days, in every lunar month, on which all good Burmans are expected to go and worship at the pagodas. These are the eighth of the crescent, the full moon, the eighth of the waning, and the change, of which the second and the fourth are the more sacred. As the monks have nothing to do with looking after the spiritual state of the people, it is entirely a matter to be settled by one's self whether any particular worship day is to be observed or not. If you conclude that strict religious observances are only necessary for your spiritual well-being on the day of the full moon, or at any rate that you may leave out the eighth of the crescent and waning moon, then the ooboh-nay does not concern you at all, and you may proceed about your ordinary business without being considered a reprobate. The very devout may go to the pagoda on all the four sacred days of the month; but if you choose to omit one or several, or substitute an ordinary day for that provided by religious custom, there is no one to take you to task for it. Were a Burman never to go to the pagoda at all, or fail to do so for any considerable time, he would indeed soon get a very bad character among his neighbours, and

might even be formally excommunicated by the yahans: there is however practically no constraint save the force of public opinion. But the duties of worship are so light, and so dependent in their details upon yourself, and there is so much amusement to be got out of a visit to the pagoda on an ooboh-nay, that few, even of the most worldly-minded, miss any great number of the appointed days, and a special festival is always carefully observed.

With the really devout, a worship day always commences on the previous evening, that of the a-peht-nay, or day of preparation. In most country villages, and occasionally even in the large English towns of Lower Burma, a few old men, as a voluntary work of merit, go round about he place beating the kyee-zee, the triangular gong, used only for this and similar religious purposes. The instrument is suspended by a string to a stick carried over the shoulder, and as the sounds vibrate, rise and fall, quicken and die away with the winding and unwinding of the cord, those who intend to keep the duty day well make ready for a start to the pagoda. Mats, sleeping rugs, blankets, and eatables are gathered together; and the whole family, with the exception of a couple of the children perhaps, left behind to look after the house, set off in a body, preceded in most cases by a kyee-zee of their own, struck at intervals by the head of the family, who slings it on a bamboo, to the other end of which, as a kind of equipoise, is fastened a lamp. The purpose of this ceremony of striking the gong is to announce to the four worlds the good work on which the party is engaged. They make their way to one of the numerous zayats, erected round the pagoda for the accommodation of pious people. If the family be a wealthy one they have probably such an open-sided, floored shed of their own, erected for the general use, but virtually reserved for themselves when

required. If they have not, or if the shrine is small and the rest-houses few, they put up in one of the general zayats, where they can always find a quiet corner to settle in. There they sleep, or, what is better, tell their beads and meditate.

Some time before daylight the food intended for the yahans is cooked, and when the sun rises a message is sent to the monastery that everything is ready. The alms have been put together in a heap in the middle of the zayat, in front of the permanent platform on which the mendicants take their station after they have arrived in a long procession of Indian file. In the meantime numbers of other more comfort-seeking laymen, who have slept at home, come trooping in from the town, also bringing offerings for the pagoda, and food for themselves and the pyin-sin. When a congregation has been made up, or when the family party is complete, the senior monk recites the Ten Precepts incumbent on all oopathaka on duty days, and adds some portion of the sermons of Shin Gautama, the other pyin-sin, sitting behind their big fans to hide the women from their sight, occasionally making the responses. Finally the Payeht-gyee, or some similar litany of praise, is intoned; all the congregation joining in the chant, with upraised hands clasping a flower or some other symbol of offering. With this the service ends. The yahans rise from behind their fans and file back to the monastery again, the food being carried after them by the pupils or the donors. When this is done the worshippers set about preparing their own breakfast—unless, indeed, as is probable, it was cooked at the same time as the food for the yahans. Each family eats separately, arranged in a circle round the great byat, or platter of rice. If, however, any one has some particular delicacy—the celebrated nga-pee goung fish paste from Payah Gyee, in the An-gyee town-

ship, iguana's eggs from Shway Gyeen side, or pickled tea fresh from the Shan hills—he gives of his abundance to those round about; and any solitary stranger from a distance is always sure of an invitation to join' some breakfast party. When all have finished eating, the fragments that remain are thrown out for the pariah dogs and the crows. Additional merit is of course gained by this act of charity. For the rest of the day, with the exception of the time that may be spent in repeating doxologies before the image of the Buddha at the pagoda, nothing is done. Every one is dressed in his best and goes about meeting his friends, or lolling comfortably with a cheroot in the zayat waiting for them to come to him. Vast quantities of betel-nut and pickled tea and local gossip are discussed. The racing-boat the Bassein men are getting ready to send for the October contests in Mandalay; the brass image Moung Waik, the extra assistant commissioner, is going to dedicate next month; the old witch down at Yuah Thit Gyee, who has caused the murrain among the Thoo-gyee's buffaloes, and the nuisance it is that the English A-yaybaing will not allow her to be tied to a bamboo and pitched into the river in the good old fashion, to prove that she really does trade in the black art; the new style in Manchester-flowered turbans that Ah Loke, the Chinese pedlar, has brought in his boat from Rangoon—all these, and a great variety of kindred topics, are considered under all their aspects.

It must not, however, be supposed that all the people take this easy-going and frivolous view of duty days. Diligent seekers after *koothoh* behave very differently. They do not merely limit themselves to the customary forms of worship and offerings. They sleep little, or not at all, the night before; telling their beads instead, and reading good books, some of the discourses of the Buddha, or portions of

the greater zahts. All necessary business is transacted the day previous to the ooboh-nay, and neighbours are exhorted to observe the festival properly. After one simple dish in the morning, they eat nothing for the rest of the day; or perhaps on certain occasions do not break their fast till after mid-day, a custom very general on the first day of Lent. Instead of staying in the noisy zayat, where the assembled people are talking of light matters, laughing and diverting themselves, they retire to a tazoung on the pagoda platform, or to some place shaded by trees, where they finger the hundred and eight beads of their rosary, muttering, "All is transient, sorrowful and vain; the Lord, the Law, the Assembly; the three precious things;" and meditate on the example of the Lord Buddha and the excellence of his law. To vary the monotony of this performance, they go for an hour or two to one of the monasteries to talk with the prior or some learned brother, or perhaps to hear him read and expound one of the jatakas, or birth-stories.

So the duty day passes. By sunset most of the worshippers are making their way back to their homes; but a few zealous spirits remain all night in the zayat, and only return with daylight on the following morning. This simple round of celebration is repeated four times in every lunar month, with here and there a feast-day of some particular shrine thrown in, when the only difference is that there is greater ceremony and a more or less large influx of strangers, according to the sanctity of the pagoda.

The sole distinction between Lent — lasting from the day after the full moon of July to the full moon of October —and the rest of the year, is that all laymen are expected to be much more regular in their observance of the weekly religious days. It is not a season of fasting, but simply of stricter execution of religious duties. No

marriages, feasts, or public amusements are held, or only by the graceless; and some of the yahans retire into the depths of the jungle, where they can devote themselves to meditation with greater security from interruption. The custom of regarding these three months as peculiarly sacred undoubtedly rose from the habit of the monks, in the first days after the Buddha's teaching, remaining steadfastly in their monasteries in Magadha during the period of the annual rains, devoting all their time to pondering over the sacred law, and expounding it to any laymen dahyakhas, or oopathakas, inquirers, or believers and searchers after the truth, who came to consult with them in their dwellings; seeking to enter the current of perfection, and, attaining the state of arahan, to float into Neh'ban, the state of joyless, painless calm. Nowadays all are expected to study the Law for themselves; but in order to prepare themselves worthily for the Wah, the wealthier people often call in the more learned yahans to deliver exhortations in their houses. Numbers of relations and friends are invited, who bring presents for the holy man, in the hope of sharing the merit of the transaction. Portions of the holy books usually are read on these occasions, especially the much-admired Waythandaya Woottoo. The doctrine inculcated by this zaht is charity; and malicious people do not hesitate to say that the giving of alms is the invariable theme of the pyin-sin. But I have at least as often heard the praises of wisdom from the Lawka-needee recited at such Lenten lectures, and a portion may be quoted here: "The ignorant bow down before the wise man. The riches of the wise man are like a bubbling spring, a fountain that never runs dry, and that, however constantly you may draw from it, is ever filled anew. The beauty of women and the sweetness of the sugar-cane bring satiety, but the words of wisdom never pall. The

lazy man will never get learning. Any man may be endowed with riches, beauty, rank, youth; but without knowledge he is but as a beautiful flower that hath no perfume. The fragrance of flowers is refreshing; more s is the light of the cool moon's rays; but the greatest delight comes from the words of wisdom. The sun may rise in the west; the summit of Mount Meru may be bent like a bow; the fires of hell may languish and die out; the lotos may spring on the tops of the mountains; but the words of truth and wisdom are always the same."

Similarly the riches of man are said to consist in his learning, his family and his good name; of a woman in her beauty; of a great man in his rank, influence, position, and the number of his slaves; of a monk in his austerity; of a serpent in its poison; and of a pohnna in his oaths and his prophecies.

Thirteen kinds of pride are enumerated. To lie in the cool shade, with the power of the heavens at his command, and to be victorious over his enemies, is the pride of the tha-gyah king. The galohn delights in flying throughout the skies above or below. The nagah prides himself in his wondrous works, bright and glorious. The lion's pride is to overcome his enemies and destroy all opposition. The merchant's pride is to have obedient slaves and abundance of gold and silver. The soldier's to enter a town with the clash of the cymbal and the pomp of military music. The peasant's to finish his toil honestly and well. The yahanda finds his pride in the power of wisdom and in books. The prince in triumphing over routed enemies and enriching himself with their spoil. A woman's pride is to talk in a pleasant and amusing way. A man's to be celebrated and feared for his strength of mind and body. A doctor's to effect successful cures with his own

medicines, and a pohnna's pride is in his wisdom and knowledge of the Baydin.

The significance of all this and a deal more similar useless information, is that during the Wah the sacred books should be studied, while all youths should receive their Buddhist baptism by putting on the wah, the yellow robe of the cloister—a Burmese play upon words which has a further significance to the young neophytes, in the reflection that "wah" also means a bamboo, which yahans do not spare, Lent or no Lent.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE END OF LENT.

THE end of the Wah, or the full moon of Thadin-gyoot, is always the occasion of a regular carnival of enjoyment, which in Rangoon has latterly shown a tendency to degenerate into uproarious saturnalia. The dismal season of the rains and of Lent, when there were no pwès anywhere, no feasts, no courting to be done wherever the parents were at all strict, no amusement of any kind to be had, except the somewhat tame diversion of a gossip with kindred spirits at the pagoda on the duty days—all this has passed away. Plays, a-hloo pwè and kyee-gyin pwè, are to be seen in every quarter; young brothers who have just finished their three months as novitiants in the monastery and have come out into the world again are wild with excitement at their regained freedom, and infect their sisters with enthusiasm for gaiety of all sorts; the town is illuminated, feasting goes on everywhere, and the street plays are so crowded that you cannot secure a decent place unless you come down early in the afternoon, or at any rate before nightfall.

But all public festivals in Burma are religious in their character, and the rejoicings at wah-gyoot are not less so

than those at wah-win, when every one was preparing for the austerities of Lent, instead of the relaxations of the coming cold months. Accordingly the merry season is ushered in with a great feasting of the monks, This sohn-daw-gyee pwè is not so extensive properly speaking as the legitimate festival of that name a month later at the time of the Tawadehntha feast, and as a matter of fact is much more modest in its character in the small towns and villages. But in Rangoon it has assumed in recent years a form which gives a great deal of offence to all the more serious people, and is especially condemned by the austere Soola-gandees. Instead of having the offerings displayed in their houses and giving them to the yahans when they come round in the grey of the morning, the new fashion with the inhabitants of Rangoon is to carry all the alms to the monastery overnight, set them up in goodly array, there and then hold receptions, sing songs, dance, play musical instruments, and generally turn the quiet monastery into the semblance of an uproarious "penny gaff." This objectionable innovation has gradually arisen out of the practice of a few of the more pious old people who at the end of Lent used to go in the evenings with a-hloo for the pyin-sin, listen to some pious discourses, or the recitation of some sacred zaht, and then return betimes to bed. But now the frivolous find monks not less carnal-minded than themselves. Subscriptions are raised for weeks beforehand to make a grand display; one of the yahans is asked to grant the zayat near his house for the occasion. Some of the monks of the Thayet-daw kyoung in Godwin's Road, which is the chief sinner in this respect, are even so shameless as actually to go touting about for people to take their zayats, or at times their very houses.

Then at nightfall, on the full moon, the people begin to troop in. Those who have taken the management of the

almsgiving are there before. We enter by one of the little wooden bridges, and come across a pya-that immediately, glittering bright with the moonlight and the glaring torches which are gathered thick farther on among the pohn-gyees' houses and the mango-trees from which the monastery takes its name. The spire has just been deposited, and the band has barely stopped the music which sounds so strange within the sacred parawoon. But there is more coming that will be a far greater shock to up-country notions of religious propriety. The first house we come to is a zayat, and Moung Moung, the dispenser of hospitality, recognises us and calls us up. All his female friends are arranged in a row at the back, dressed in their finest, and before them, just as at the Ta'soung mohn alms-feast, are heaped up piles of fruits, savoury curries, cakes, biscuits, and sweetmeats of all kinds, intended for the monks; while scattered about are great *repoussé* silver bowls full of sherbet, gold and silver cups, lamps, mirrors, and all the familiar adornments fit enough for a private house, but singularly out of place where a gay piece of tapestry hung up barely conceals the image at the eastern side of the rest-house. Moung Moung offers us some lemonade, and we light cheroots, exchange a few compliments with the ladies, and pass on, just as a noisy half dozen of young Englishmen from one of the mercantile houses come scrambling up the ladder-like steps. It would be well if these gentlemen would remember that each of the houses is to all intents and purposes a private assembly for the night, and that, though the host always welcomes them, he understands English, and does not by any means relish the mocking comments which are lavished on everything, and still less is inclined to approve of the criticisms on the ladies. But then there are so few Englishmen in Burma who understand the

very shortest sentence in the language that they may be pardoned if they mistake for a promiscuous saturnalia what is nominally a religious ceremony. We leave them joking with Moung Moung and the hostess, as she offers them some beer—beer in a monastery! But then it is known that Englishmen will be there, and the Burman's notion is that an Englishman only leaves off drinking beer when he drinks brandy, so this last indignity is not objected to by the yahans.

Farther on we come to the place we are specially in search of. The master of ceremonies here is our friend Moung Poh See, a Patama Byan, a certificated theologian and long resident in Mandalay, qualified, therefore, to be a yahan himself, and from his previous experiences, one would think, not at all likely to countenance such open contempt of the provisions of the Weenee, which treatise his success in the above-mentioned "theological tripos" implies that he knows by heart. But "Mr. Grandfather Oil" is very emphatically in the world of kahma; he is far from having beaten down the passions, and his place is the most startlingly secular of them all. He has got the house of a myizzee matee, a pohn-gyee who has been ten Lents in the order, and ought therefore to scorn such desecration for any purpose whatever, and certainly should not be tempted by the offer of a feast for his palate. But the fact remains that not only has he given up the front part of his kyoung, all but the elevated daïs on the eastern side, where the images stand and visitors are received, but there is actually a play going on, trumpets braying, drums beating, and the bamboo clappers sounding high over all. It is a zaht, a birth-story certainly, but that does not make it any less a sin for the pohn-gyee to be so near, and with all those thirty pretty girls looking on too. The monk is behind the curtain which shuts off the undesecrated part

of the building, it is true, but he can hardly be asleep with all that music, surely, and it is a crime for a member of the order to listen to music. Yet who is to condemn him to penance when the prior's house is very little better? In some of the kyoungs, indeed, the younger yahans take very little trouble to conceal the fact that they are looking through the chinks of the slight hangings which cut off their sleeping places from the noisy throng on the other side. The Englishmen, when they come round, push aside the kullagahs to see what is behind, stumble over the peeping postulants, and scare the conscience-stricken "ascetics" almost out of their senses, under the impression that it is a beeloo who has been enabled to gain access, and is going to devour them incontinently. Nevertheless there is no check in the revelry. It goes on until far into the night, and increases in noise the later it gets. The liquor which has been brought for expected visiting foreigners cannot be left behind in the kyoungs; they are not low enough for that yet. Consequently, the laymen must drink it. The result is that as time goes on there are quarrels and fights; and in this very Thayetdaw kyoung in the Thadin-gyoot of 1879 a man was stabbed and died within the limits of the parawoon. Little wonder that the strict Soola-gandees are gaining over many of the more respectable inhabitants of Rangoon, for even this horror has not diminished the popularity of the wahgyoot alms feast.

The noise and hubbub goes on till far into the morning, and when at last the people go, the monks may be supposed to have a little rest, for they can hardly have slept much before however steadily they lay on their mats. The offerings are eaten next morning, and it is greatly to be feared that there are many abstentions from the morning's round of alms-begging. Such dissipation must

scatter to the winds any merit acquired by diligent piety and meditation in the long weeks of Lent.

In country towns, revels of this kind are never seen, and even in Mandalay, though there are festivities in abundance, the monasteries are never invaded in this scandalous way. A more harmless and decidedly prettier custom is the illumination, called toung-pyee pwè, of the pagodas and the town. In Rangoon a very fine effect is produced by hanging the Soolay Pagoda, in Fytche Square, all round with Chinese lanterns, from the base up to the top of the thabeht-hmouk, where the body of the shrine begins to narrow into the spire. The rings of coloured light narrowing upwards in a veritable pyramid of fire, produce one of the finest sights of the kind to be seen in the country. The street lamps, however, somewhat handicap the simple means of illumination open to the inhabitants, and to see the illumination of a town at its best one must go to Mandalay at wah-gyoot time. There for three nights the whole city is a blaze of light, contrasting very emphatically with its usual gloomy appearance. Candles are placed on posts at intervals of ten paces in every street, and the tsè-ehng goungs have very plain-worded instructions as to what will happen to them if any of the lights in front of the ten houses of which they have charge go out. Mandalay Hill is a fine sight. The two covered ways which lead up the steep uneven sides to the pagoda and the richly gilt Gautama on the top, look like streams of flame, or fiery serpents from the haunted nat-toung, under the shade of the Shan hills. But the monasteries which cluster close in to the foot of the sacred hill are all as dark and still as on any night in the middle of the Wah. No unseemly orgies are permitted there. In the town, on the other hand, all is noise and merriment. Bands of music and dances figure at the corners of all the chief streets, and

the king himself, or the ministers at his request, gives plays at each of the four gates of the palace stockade. The capital is crowded with umbrella-bearing chiefs and officials, Shan tsawbwas, and chieftains of the mountain tribes all come down with their bands of wild followers to do homage to the Lord of the Rising Sun, for the greatest of the kadaw-nay, the beg-pardon days, is always immediately after Lent. Having brought their minds into a sedate and tranquil state by the observances of the Wah, it is fitting that men should come and make submission and do obeisance at the golden feet.

At the same season there is an illumination on the river. As soon as it is dark the villagers row out into the middle of the stream and set adrift a multitude of little oil lamps, each fastened to a little float of bamboo or plantain stems. The lamps are simply little earthenware cups filled with oil, and each supplied with a small piece of cotton for a wick. Thousands of them are sent out by a single village, and the sight from a steamer suddenly rounding a bend and coming upon a bank of these little stars of light afloat on the river is very singular. In the distance it looks like a regular sea of flame, and as there is plenty of oil, on the night of the full moon there is a constant succession of these shoals of twinkling lights floating down the whole length of the Irrawaddy from above Bhamaw to China Buckeer, every village sending its contingent.

This ceremony, called yay-hpoung hmyaw thee, or mee-hpoung hmyaw thee, launching water or fire rafts, is in remembrance of a universally honoured payah-ngè, a lesser divinity called Shin Oopagoh, who lives down at the bottom of the river in a kyee-pya-that, a brazen spire, where he zealously keeps the sacred days. In a former existence he carried off the clothes of a bather, and for this mischievous

pleasantry is condemned to remain in his present quarters till Areemadehya, the next Buddha, shall come. Then he will be set free, and entering the thenga will become a yahanda, and attain Neh'ban. He is a favourite subject for pictures, which represent him sitting under his brazen roof, or on the stump of a tree, eating out of an alms-bowl, which he carries in his arms. Sometimes he is depicted gazing sideways up to the skies, where he seeks a place that is not polluted by corpses. Such a spot is not to be found on earth, where every stock and stone is but the receptacle of a departed spirit. The notion is like that of the Tibetan monks, who look upon the earth as simply a vast graveyard. They carry human finger-joints strung together for a rosary, eat their food out of a human skull, and instead of horns for trumpets use the bones of a man's fore-arm. "We are dead," they say, "and dead men have nothing to do with the things of the living."

Of a similar character to this illuminating of the pagodas, the town, and the river, is the letting loose of fire-balloons, from the end of Lent to the Tawadehntha festival in Ta'soungmohn. The balloons are sometimes very big, but they are simple enough structures. A bamboo framework is covered over with the thick, coarse, home-made paper manfactured from the bark of the ma-hlaing-bin (*Broussonetia papyrifera*), which also supplies the material for the black parabeik note-books. At the bottom, across the open mouth of the balloon, is a little platform, on which pitch is heaped, and with torches attached to it. The balloon is then tethered to the ground. The torches and resinous matter are lighted, and when the strain on the stays is considered sufficient, they are cut, and the balloon goes off. They are dangerous in large towns, and are forbidden there, but the Burman considers that the law applies only to the ground round the town, and dozens are

let off every year from spots only a hundred yards or so outside of municipal limits. Not unseldom dohn, rockets, and other kinds of fireworks are attached to them, not by any means tending to make them safer for the houses below. This mee-ehng byan, as it is called, is in honour of the Soola-manee payah, a pagoda erected in Tawadehntha, over Mount Myemmoh, by the Tha-gyah, king of the Nat-dewahs. When Prince Theidat left his palace, his wife, and forsook all to become a Buddha, he rode as far as the river Anawma and leaped over it on his famous steed Kantika. Then he drew his sword, cut off his long hair and threw it into the air, where it remained suspended, till the Tha-gyah-min carried it off in a basket and had his Soola-manee shrine built over it. Hence the offering of fire-balloons.

Thus offerings are made on earth, water, and in the air. The whole month, from the full moon which ends Lent till the feast commemorative of the nogahna alms of Thoozata, is distinguished by specially abundant a-hloo to the pagodas and to the behkkoo. A peculiarly pretty offering is that called a pan-teing, a pyramid somewhat like a pya-that, entirely composed of flowers in wreaths and nosegays, which is conducted with much dancing and sounds of music, to be laid before the great image. Fantastic tin shrines and lanterns made to hold big, two-inch-thick candles, often plaited of long tapers made of different coloured wax, are presented, and along with these, huge monkish fans, each adorned round the edge with tags of gold-leaf and little pictures; big muslin dragons distended on hoops and long streamers to be hung from the poles surmounted with the sacred hentha, or the kalawaik, are also frequent. It is also customary at this season to make the monks large offerings of honey—pya-yee hloo-thee. This can hardly be called a separate festival, but as the

honey is only given in these months, it affords sufficient cause for the exhibition of plays and energetic dancing on the way to the monastery.

All these religious observances, sufficiently mixed up with secular enjoyment, are accompanied by other occupations which cannot be said to have anything directly to do with religion. Such is the preparation of the boats, and the practice for the races, which always take place in Thadin-gyoot. They must wait, however, till Lent is over; and the racing boats are almost always kept under the houses of the yahans, so that even here there is ground for the assertion that all great public feasts in Burma are connected with religion. But the Burmans are very far from being sad worshippers, and any one who has been in the country in the months of October and November would be inclined to assert that the whole round of existence in Burma was made up of junketings and pleasure-parties.

CHAPTER XXII.

NATS AND SPIRIT-WORSHIP.

NOTWITHSTANDING that Buddhism has been the established religion in Burma since shortly after the third great council at Patalipootra in 241 B.C. (283 of the sacred era), and that the purest form of the faith exists, and is firmly believed in, yet, throughout the whole A-shay Pyee, both in Independent and British territory, the old geniolatry still retains a firm hold on the minds of the people. Missionaries say that it is a natural revolting of the human mind against the denial of the existence of a Supreme Being, superior to man, and controlling his destiny. Government officers assert that the retention of the prior religion (for it is undoubtedly a kind of second religion) is due to the fact that surrounding, and scattered about among the Buddhist Burmans, are numerous tribes—Karens, Kachins, and others—who have no form of belief but nat-worship, the reverencing of the spirits of nature. As a simple matter of fact, it is undeniable that the propitiating of the nats is a question of daily concern to the lower class Burman, while the worship at the pagoda is only thought of once a week. For the nat may prove destructive and hostile at any time, whereas the acquisition of koothoh at the pagoda is a thing which

may be set about in a business-like way, and at proper and convenient seasons.

Before proceeding further, it will be well to discuss the word "nat" itself. General Phayre and Bishop Bigandet have not yet settled whether Nat is derived from the Sanskrit term nath, meaning "master, husband, lord," or not. The question may be philologically interesting, but is not likely to be definitely settled till the languages of "Farther India" are better known. What concerns us is the fact that "nat" means in Burmese two distinct kinds of individuals. It may be applied to the inhabitants of the six inferior heavens, properly called dewahs, who figure in Hindu mythology, and have thence been transferred to the Buddhist world-system. Kings and virtuous people are rewarded with happiness in these six seats after a good life upon earth. The Tha-gyah min, the king of the nats, or dewahs, comes down to earth at the beginning of the Burman year, and remains here for three days, and his subjects generally display great solicitude for the pious state and welfare of mankind, but otherwise they are matters of no concern to dwellers in the loo-pyee unless as objects of envy. Perfectly distinct from these are the nats of the house, the air, the water, the forest,—the spirits of nature, fairies, elves, gnomes, kelpies, kobolds, pixies, whatever other names they have received in other countries. Burmans never have any confusion in their mind on the subject, such as may occasionally occur to a foreigner. The genii and peris of Eastern story, though doubtless springing from the Hindu dewahs, have no real analogy in Burmese literature, any more than the idea of the *devil*—etymologically connected with the word dev-a or dewah—has anything to do with the joys of Tawadehntha and Tohttheeta, the best known heavens of nats of the superior order.

The worship of nats, of the spirits, then, has nothing to

do with Buddhism, and is denounced by all the more earnest of the pyin-sin as being heretical and antagonistic to the teachings of the Lord Buddha. The late King Mindohn, who was a true defender of the faith, and possessed of a deeper knowledge of the Pali texts than many of the members of the Assembly of the Perfect, fulminated an edict against the reverence paid to the nats, and ordered its discontinuance under severe penalties, but the worship was never really stopped, and under King Theebaw's erratic rule flourishes more than ever.

The term spirit-*worship* hardly conveys a proper notion. Even the Karens and Kachins, who have no other form of belief, do not regard them otherwise than as malevolent beings who must be looked up to with fear, and propitiated by regular offerings. They do not want to have anything to do with the nats; all they seek is to be let alone. The bamboo pipes of spirit, the bones of sacrificial animals, the hatchets, swords, spears, bows and arrows that line the way to a Kachin village, are placed there not with the idea of attracting the spirits, but of preventing them from coming right among the houses in search of their requirements. If they want to drink, the rice spirit has been poured out, and the bamboo stoup is there in evidence of the libation; the blood-stained skulls of oxen, pigs, and the feathers of fowls show that there has been no stint of meat offerings; should the nats wax quarrelsome, and wish to fight, there are the axes and dahs with which to commence the fray. Only let them be grateful, and leave their trembling worshippers in peace and quietness. For the Karen all nature is filled with nats, every tree and stone and pool and breath of air has its spirit. The dead are only separated from the living by a thin white veil, through which, however, none but the gifted can see and venture to speak to them in words. So the Caffres leave an open space in their line of battle that

there may be room for the spirits of dead heroes to join in the conflict and fight on their behalf.

The Burmans are naturally not so wholesale nor so demonstrative in their recognition of the existence of spirits. The yahans would not endure it, and Buddhism has at any rate a somewhat softening, and reassuring power. Nevertheless evidences of the fact of the belief are universal and not to be mistaken, in all parts of the country, but more especially among the Talaings (or Mohns, in their own tongue) in British territory and north of Mandalay, in the neighbourhood of the geniolatric mountain tribes in Independent Burma. At the extremity of every village, the yua-sohn, there is a nat-sin, a shrine for the nat or nats of the neighbourhood. This varies very much in size and character. Sometimes it is a mere bamboo cage, hung in a peepul or other tree, or slung on a post, a bird-cage kind of construction, with an image inside, and a little hole through which the superstitious can introduce their offerings, tiny water-pots, oil-lamps, and little morsels of food. Often, if the village is larger, the shrine is much more pretentious, assuming almost the size and appearance of a zayat, a large tectum or roof, gabled and supported with red posts, the platform ornamented, and with a daïs at one end, on which a representation of the nat is placed at the feast time, which, in imitation of the pagoda festivals, occurs at a regular fixed season. At other times these images are kept stowed away in an adjoining chamber, built for the purpose. It is particularly irritating to an educated Burman to see these absurd figures, which remind one of nothing so much as the fetiches of the prognathous African. Two gaudily dressed puppets, masquerading with spire-like crown, and royal, sharp-pointed swords, represent the much-feared nats, Shway Pyin-gyee and Shway Pyin-ngè, the Nyee-

daw, Noung-daw, the Royal Younger Brother and the Royal Elder Brother, who command much respect in the neighbourhood of the capital and in Upper Burma generally. A still more dreaded spirit is one whose representation figures in a shrine at Tagoung, one of the ancient capitals of the country, half way between Mandalay and Bhamaw. He appears simply as a head on a post, four feet high or thereabouts. A spire-like crown rests on his head, his eyes protrude and goggle in semi-globular wrath, asinine ears and a Punch-like nose complete the likeness, for he has no mouth, and his body is that of a dragon. Every one avoids his temple as much as possible, but the inhabitants of the village bow in that direction before they venture to do anything, and passing boatmen kindle lamps and offer flowers, of which he is said to be particularly fond, and fruit, for the nat has an incorrigible habit of giving people the stomach ache when he is offended, and death punishes the recalcitrant. "Tagoung colic" is a recognised ailment with the Burmese faculty.[1]

First in the list of personal spirits may be considered the koh-soung nats, a kind of confusion of ideas between the proper spirit and the butterfly spirit, and representing as it were the genius of each individual, a kind of materialised conscience. They are twelve in number, six good and six bad, six male and six female, and regulate the life and doings of their *protégé* accordingly as the benevolent or the malevolent gain the upper hand.

Next to these comes the ehng-soung nat, very often called Min-mahgayee, the guardian nat of the house. For his comfort the tops of all the posts in the house are

[1] The demon is said to have been one of the ancient kings of the place, who acquired his power from magical arts which he learned in Northern India. Three famous pagodas in the defile take their names from episodes in his life; and his two sons founded the dynasty of Prome.

covered with a hood of white cotton cloth, for it is in this situation that he usually takes up his abode. In almost every house, at the end of the verandah in front, you will find a water-pot full of payeht-yay, water over which certain gathas, magic spells, or religious formulæ have been uttered by the astrologer, or the prior of the district. This water, which is replenished once a month, or oftener in cases of danger from disease, or when a member of the family is absent on a journey, is every now and then sprinkled about the house as a protection against beeloos and spectres, ogres and tasehts. When the water is consecrated in this nyoung-yay-oh, which is of a special shape, something like an overgrown Indian spittoon, there are always a few twigs and leaves of the tha-byay bin floating on the top. These are mostly taken out and hung round about the eaves, but occasionally left in the water. The inordinately superstitious sometimes keep a small tha-byay bin (the sacred eugenic) growing in a pot in the house, so that its benign influence may keep harm away. Talaing houses may usually be known by the cocoa-nut hanging up at the south side of the building. This is covered with strips and tags of yellow or red cloth, and is offered to Min-mahgayee, whom they call the king of the nats. Of these spirits (called kalook in their language) they say there are thirty-seven distinct varieties, but Min-mahgayee rules them all. At the beginning of the wet season they always wrap up the cocoa-nut afresh, and when the rains are over make new offerings of money, glutinous rice, eggs, jaggari, and fruit, in order that the ehng-soung nat may keep away fever from the household. It must not be supposed that the nat guardian of the house has necessarily any affection for those who have built the place where he has taken up his abode. He probably regards them only with cold indifference, however generous they

may be in their offerings, and were he not propitiated by these gifts he would almost certainly display his anger by doing the inhabitants some grievous injury. But then he dislikes his haunts being intruded upon, and if a stranger comes at an unwonted time—a burglar at midnight for example—it is quite likely that the ehng-soung nat will attack him violently, scare him out of his wits, or give him the colic. Thus without any really estimable purpose in his mind, Min-mahgayee may be a considerable protection to his worshippers.

Beyond this guardian, or demon of the house, there is the guardian nat of the village, the yua-soung nat, of whose shrine at the end of the town I have already made mention. None of the lower class Talaings would ever think of eating a morsel without first holding up his platter in the air, and breathing a prayer to the village nat. They are particularly fond of putting up shrines to the nats under the le'pan tree, from the wood of which coffins are frequently made. A feast must be held every three or four years in honour of this nat, at which the nat Kadaw, a woman called the nat's wife, dances. This is done in order that sickness may be kept away. Should an epidemic actually break out, a very elaborate ceremony is gone through. Probably first of all the figure of a spectre, or of a beeloo, is painted on an ordinary earthenware water-pot, and this is solemnly smashed to pieces about sundown with a heavy stick or a dah. As soon as it gets dark, the entire populace break out into yells, and make as much noise generally as they can compass, with the view of scaring away the evil spirit who has brought the disease. This is repeated on three several nights, and if it is not then effective the yahans are called in to give their assistance. The prior with his following repeat the Ten Precepts, chant the Payeht-gyee, and then one of the sermons of

the Lord Buddha is declaimed, the same by the preaching of which he drove away the pestilence which was devastating the country of Waythalee. If this last ceremony is not effectual the village is abandoned. The inhabitants leave the sick and the dying to their fate, and go off to the jungle, where each household camps out by itself for a time. Before they return again, the yellow-robed monks, in recognition of much alms, read the Law up and down the street between the houses. When they have gone back to the monastery, the nat's shrine is repaired, and abundant offerings deposited. Having thus made their peace with the representatives of both religions, the people return to their houses, light fires, cook rice for new offerings, and then enter upon their ordinary pursuits as if no interruption whatever had occurred.

This is what would take place in any ordinary Burman village. But among the Talaings, and in the more retired places in the jungle, occupied by ignorant uncultivated Burmans, the function called yua-hkya-thee would be carried out, which is much more purely geniolatric in its character. This is sometimes done when a prominent man in the hamlet is sick, more often when there is danger of a contagious disease. A great feast of cooked rice and meat, roasted fowls and ducks forming a prominent part of it, is heaped up on a platform specially erected for the purpose some distance outside the village. Everybody in the village is required to have some part in the ceremony. A few are sent out beforehand, who dress themselves up in a fantastic way, and pretend to be beeloos, evil nats, and witches. With them are others who feign to be dogs, and rush about on all fours, barking and howling; others represent pigs, and grunt and nuzzle about with their noses in the ground. After this performance has been carried on for a certain time, the remainder of

the villagers come out in a band, and, through one or more spokesmen, demand of the possessed whether those lying sick at home will recover, and whether the bad spirits are satisfied with the offerings. It is specially ordained at these exhibitions that no one shall be called by his real name; such mention, if made inadvertently, would expose the person addressed to considerable danger, even if he should make no sign betraying himself, for he certainly would not answer. The quasi tasehts always reply that the sick will recover and the plague leave the locality. Thereupon the villagers rush off like madmen into the surrounding forest, and run about hither and thither in a reckless way with an open cloth, or the end of their waistcloth, in their hands. Some of them suddenly make a plunge with their cloth over a bush or a tussock of grass, and then closing it up carefully, hurry breathless back to the village. The lehp-bya or "butterflies" of the sick man are supposed to have been captured. The pasoh, or cloth, is carefully opened and shaken over the patient's head, and the lehp-bya is supposed to return to its proper habitation. This operation is repeated several times, in case a wrong "butterfly" might have been captured, or lest the actual one should have escaped on the way. Then everybody returns. The function is not without its danger, for it has happened that the temporary mimes have become permanently possessed of evil spirits, and as witches and wizards have proved as great curses to the neighbourhood as any pestilence could have been. Which things are an allegory. The whole ceremony is beginning to get into very bad odour, and respectable people avoid having anything to do with it, while those who have taken a part are ashamed to own it. All these nats are directly connected with a particular locality, and therefore well known to, and regularly propitiated by, the inhabitants of that place. But there are

abundance of nats to be found elsewhere, away from villages and houses, and all of them equally ready to resent any injury which the passer-by may unwittingly do them. When a Burman starts on a journey he hangs a bunch of plantains, or a twig of the tha-byay tree, on the pole of the buffalo cart or the stern of the boat, to conciliate any spirit whose beat he may intrude upon. The fisherman makes offerings in his nat-sin every time he launches his dugout; the lonely hunter in the forest deposits some rice and ties together a few leaves whenever he comes across some particularly large and imposing tree, lest there might be a thi'pin-soung nat dwelling there. Should there be none, the tied-back twigs will at any rate stand in evidence to the taw-soung nat, the demon who presides over all the forest. When there is a boat race, the opposing crews have a preliminary row over the course with offerings placed on the prow for the nat who guards that stretch of the river. And so on through numberless examples. Some nats achieve fame, and are known far and wide by special appellations. Such is Moung Inn Gyee, a spirit who is feared in all the district round Rangoon, and away eastward and northward as far as Pegu. He lives in the water, and causes death. A special festival is celebrated in his honour, or rather in deprecation, in the month of Wahsoh, the same in which Lent begins. Others more especially known in Upper Burma are Byindohn, Shway Pyin-Gyee and his brother, and a drunkard nat called Moung Min Gyaw, to whom great quantities of rice spirit are offered. Ooyin Gyee is a spirit universally known among the Talaings. The chief spirit of a district usually goes by the name of A-shin Gyee, the great lord, or, among the Talaings, Ohkkaya. Then there are generic names; there is the Hmin nat who lives in woods, and shakes those he meets so that they go mad. There is the Oopakah, who

flies about in the clouds to spy out men whom he may snap up. There is the Akakasoh who lives in the tops of trees, Shekkasoh who lives in the trunk, and Boomasoh who is content with a dwelling in the roots. The presence of spirits or witches in trees may always be ascertained by the quivering and trembling of the leaves when all around are still.

The Talaings, and many of the Burmans in the Irrawaddy delta, have a regular nat-feast just before harvesting begins. The figure of a woman is fashioned out of straw, and a tamehn, kerchief, and other portions of female dress placed along with it in a bullock cart. Great quantities of kouk-hnyin, "sticky rice," are heaped up, and the whole driven in procession round the ripe paddy fields. The figure is then set up in the place where the paddy is to be stored, and the offerings are usually swept away by the boys of the place, whose appetites overcome their fear of the nats, Boomadee, the guardian of the earth, and Nagyee, the guardian of the grain, to propitiate whom the feast is held.

There is a theory that persons who are executed or meet a violent death become nats and haunt the place where they were killed. They are called nat-sehn. Advantage is taken of this to guard the capital. When the town is founded, at each of the four corners of the city walls and under the gate-posts people are buried alive. Their spirits thereafter hover about the place and bring disaster on strangers who come there with evil intentions. Monks and nuns who lead bad lives and break their vows are also believed to pass into demons when they die. There is therefore a constant and lamentable recruiting of the forces of the nats and tasehts.

In some places certain nats have qualities ascribed to them which are not entirely obstructive and obnoxious.

For example, in a nat's house at Nyoung Oo, before the figure of a spirit called A-pay Shway Myo Sin, lies a twisted, curious-shaped stone, which has magic powers ascribed to it. The sick come and try to lift it up. If they are successful they will soon recover health; if, on the other hand, its weight is too much for them, the inquirers will die. Similarly, on the ascent to Mandalay Hill there is a little chapel in which, besides three figures of the hentha, the Brahminy goose, each said to contain a sacred tooth brought from Ceylon, there is a flat, oval stone, with mystic characters inscribed on it. Many resort there to ascertain the probable issue of an intended journey or enterprise. If the stone proves heavy, the sign is bad.

The belief in spirits naturally induces a corresponding faith in omens. The Dehtton, an astrological book constantly in the hands of baydin sayahs, but carefully excluded from all monasteries, gives a great variety of them; auguries from the flight and number of birds seen, omens from the barking of dogs, the movements of bees, and the laying of eggs by fowls. Rules are given for choosing the site on which a house is to be built, and omens drawn from the substances found in digging the foundations. Posts are called male, female, or a-thet ma shee, neuter, according as they are of the same girth throughout, larger at the bottom or in the middle. Under ordinary circumstances, houses with female teing are fortunate, with neuter disastrous. Posts which are largest at the top are called teing beeloo, "demon beams," and are especially unhappy.

If a hen lays an egg upon a cloth, its owner will lose money. To come across mushrooms at the beginning of a journey is a most fortunate sign. A snake crossing the path always denotes delay, whether in a lawsuit, a journey, or a warlike expedition. If a dog carries an

unclean thing up into his master's house, he may get thrashed for it, but the man will become rich; and so on in infinite variety.

All this belief in supernatural powers tends to produce abundance of experts who profess to be able to explain signs and to control the evil spirits. Every district possesses its nat thoo-ngè, or nat mehmma, a spirit woman who dances at the nat feasts, and at ordinary times is consulted by the superstitious on all kinds of subjects connected with her trade. She is asked where so-and-so, lately deceased, is, to what seat of the world he has migrated; where absent persons are, and what they are doing; what facilities there are for special undertakings, and when they should be begun.

The baydin sayahs claim similar knowledge, and are equally abundant. Numbers of them may be seen at any time of the day sitting under the trees on the way up to the Shway Dagohn pagoda, writing and rubbing out figures and letters on their black note-books, and drawing a comfortable income from an unfailing succession of inquirers. Sometimes such a magic-worker wishing to establish a reputation, or having a spite against somebody, performs the ceremony called pohnna-ga teikgyin. He carries off some cinders from the funeral pyres of people who have been burnt, and collecting a large assortment of such charred pieces of wood, puts them secretly in the house of the person whose feelings he wishes to work on. At night the spirits come and keep up a battery of stones on the unfortunate man's roof, all attempts to find out where the stones come from being as unavailing as they were in a similar instance in the suburbs of London not very long ago.

It is consolatory, however, to know that piety will protect any one from the attacks of malevolent spirits.

Numerous stories told by the yahans prove the virtue of the gahtas to guard against evil. If the victim has only knowledge and strength of mind sufficient to recite these religious formulæ, the wiles of the nats are harmless. In case of the utmost need, even the ordinary tharana gohn, the payah, tayah, thengah, is of much avail, if only uttered with faith. It is with the idea of keeping away beeloos, tasehts, and demons that the members of the yellow robe are often summoned to death-beds. There is no thought of the monk administering spiritual consolation to the dying man. The good influence of his pious presence keeps away evil spirits, and nothing more. No exhortations of the yahan can alter the balance of merit and demerit which is already cast up for the dying man.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RICE CULTIVATION.

ABOUT three millions of acres are under cultivation in British Burma, and of this total all but some three hundred thousand acres are devoted to the growing of rice. Tobacco, sugar-cane, cotton, and oil-seeds of different kinds, as well as fruit-trees, form the other crops. The alluvial lands of the Irrawaddy delta produce by far the greatest quantity of rice. This is due as much to the security in which the people now live as to any superior facility for raising the grain. It is certain that the best quality of rice comes at present from this part of the country, but this may be due to more practised agricultural skill or long-continued tilling of the land. Hardly any possible number of crops in a season could exhaust the fertility of the soil. Any part of the country, however, may be used for the cultivation of rice. The laziest farm is a swamp-land, where the ordinary rain-fall is sufficient to produce the sodden ground requisite for a rice crop. Such low-lying plains and the riparian lands, annually flooded by the overflow of the river, are naturally best suited to Burmese indolence and are earliest taken up. Farther up the country, where the rain runs off the

surface quickly and the land is too high for the south-west monsoon floods, it is necessary to resort to irrigation, either by the obvious method of dams or by ingenious water-wheels. Finally, there is the laborious toung-ya cultivation, where whole hillsides are cleared of trees to produce a crop. This hard work is left to mild aboriginal or other tribes, whom the Burman has long ago bullied out of the fat lowlands.

Malicious people have declared that the only things a Burman does well are steering a boat and driving a bullock-cart. This is a libel; he can cultivate rice remarkably well. Unfortunately, however, as far as a vindication of his character as a worker is concerned, this does not imply any severe labour. Here the Burman is a victim of circumstances. So rich is the soil of his native land that it has only to be scratched to burst into plenty; the ploughing of the land cannot be described in any other way. The south-west monsoon, commencing early in June, soon reduces the ground to a soft sea of mud. When this has come about, the Burman proceeds to plough it. His plough is a single-barred harrow, or rake, with three long teeth of tough acacia-wood; a high bow or loop of bent wood rises from the cross-bar, and standing on this, the farmer is dragged backwards and forwards till the ground is reduced to a smooth surface—no very difficult matter. Oxen are frequently used, but more commonly the mud-loving buffalo, partly because he regards the toil as a pleasure, and partly because of his greater strength. Lazier farmers still adopt the primitive method of making the children drive the buffaloes and plough-oxen up and down in the yielding mud so as to poach it up well; and then a log of wood is drawn over it to smooth it down. None of the farms are large, the average being somewhere between ten and twenty acres; so that this work is soon

over. Nurseries are prepared at the same time on somewhat higher ground, where the seed will not rot with excessive moisture, and here the grain is sown broadcast.

Agricultural operations are now suspended for a month or six weeks. By about the beginning of August the ploughed fields have become somewhat less fluid, and the plants in the nursery, called pyoh-kyè-lè, have grown to a fair size. These are then pulled up and carried off to the prepared lands. A kouk-seik-tan, or knobbed stick, is used to make holes in the ground at intervals of a few inches, and into each of these holes a couple of plants are inserted. This work is left to the women and children, many of whom prefer their hands to the stick. The farmer squats on one of the solid ridges, which intersect the ground and serve as footpaths, and with a huge green cheroot in his mouth, leisurely contemplates the operation. Everything is now in the hands of nature, and the agriculturist may lounge round his farm in peace till November; unless, indeed, excessive rain floods the ground and rots the crop, when a new planting out has to be gone through. The harvesting is almost entirely done by men from Upper Burma. They work for very little, and it saves the farmer a good deal of time and dignity to get all the cutting done for him. Accordingly, from October till December the steamers down the Irrawaddy are crowded with King Theebaw's subjects, all of whom have had to leave behind them with their Myo-sah, or his delegate the Myo-woon, who vicariously "eat" the township between them, a pledge either of property or of some member of their family, that they will return to their country again. When they get back, very little of their hard-earned gains escapes the voracity of the royal officials. These a-nyah-thahs, as they are called, behave remarkably well in British territory, notwithstanding the assertions of the rural police,

who, being unable to detect dacoits, declare that these are all Upper Burmans who have come down for the harvest. They are really, however, mostly simple, quiet people, who are kept very much in awe by the bluster and town-knowledge of the down-country farmers, and work away zealously with their queer sickles, looking like the ordinary English article worn to half its original size by long use. It is worthy of notice that the grain is not mown close to the ground as in Europe. Very little more than the ears are cut off, and the straw burnt in the hot weather of March and April supplies a scarcely-needed fertilising to the soil. The reapers usually receive their payment from the farmer in grain, but they naturally convert this into money, or more portable goods, before they start off home again.

It does not take long to cut the crop, and then the corn is brought in to the homestead, commonly on rude sledges, more seldom in carts. The threshing-floor does not take much preparing. It is simply a portion of the field swept clean. It is sufficiently hard from the broiling sun, and a stake is driven into the centre of the circle. Two lines of sheaves are arranged round this, head to head, and the grain is trodden out by slow-moving bullocks in good old lazy fashion. The Christian Biblical precept, not to muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn, does not fail of observance with the Buddhist farmer. Then the paddy, that is, the unhusked grain, is winnowed. In some places hand-winnowing machines of a simple pattern are used; but ordinarily a far more primitive and easy method, corresponding to the substitution of oxen for threshing-flails, is in use. A man stands on an elevated platform and capsizes baskets of paddy brought from the threshing-floor; the rice falls on a sloping bamboo mat and so to the ground, the wind blowing away a great part of the bits of

broken straw, chaff, and light grain. The system may not be very thorough, but it saves an immense amount of trouble, which is the chief consideration. All that now remains to be done is to carry the grain off to the big rice-boat lying in the creek. There it is stowed in bulk; and after a day or two, the farmer makes a start, dropping leisurely down through the network of creeks into one of the main streams, and so making his way to Rangoon, or Bassein, whence he will return in a few weeks with fine Chinese neckerchiefs for his daughters and perhaps a gay Manchester pasoh or two for himself and his sons—unless, indeed, the Madras money-lender has snapped up all his receipts down in town, or some of the robber-boats that infest the creeks at this time of the year have pounced upon him and carried off everything but the boat and the paddles.

Rice-farming would be profitable as well as easy work were it not for the reckless squandering of almost all the cultivators. The average rent per acre is under three shillings; the average produce of the land per acre is from eighty to a hundred bushels in the more fertile parts, while elsewhere the yield is from forty to fifty. The selling price of rice per maund (80 lbs.) in Rangoon is between 4*s.* 6*d.* and 5*s.* Agriculturists, therefore, ought to grow rich. But they are too fond of gambling and building works of merit to accumulate money, and their carelessness results in the constant death of their plough-beasts, so that matters usually remain exactly at the same level if the farmer does not actually get into permanent debt. The Scottish Highlanders have a pious wish, "May the free hand always be full!" If it is not always full in Burma it is consoling to think that it is seldom absolutely empty. Still, when the grandson succeeds he ordinarily finds that there is as little actual money hoarded up about the place

as there was when the grandfather Poh Gyee spent so many borrowed rupees at his uncle's funeral.

If rice cultivation is easy work in the low country, it is very different with the toung-ya, or hill clearings. Here the dense underwood and forest growth has to be cut down; and the more there is to cut the better the crop, for the soil needs fertilising badly, and all that is cut down is burned. Work is begun about April; everything is felled, bushes and all; and after the fallen logs have dried some time in the sun, the brushwood is heaped up round about them and the whole is set on fire. Some of the logs smoulder for weeks—perhaps till the first rains come. Then the ground is rudely dug up with hoes, and the ashes turned in. Cotton-seed is ordinarily mixed with the rice, which is of a quite different variety from that produced in the plains. It is sown broadcast, and the farmer has thereafter only to keep down the weeds, but this is not by any means a light task. The crop is ready by October, and furnishes little more than enough to support the family or community. The scanty manure provided by the wood-ashes is not sufficient to last for another year; and when the crop is secured the party proceeds on to a new settlement, there to repeat the same laborious process. A very ingenious device for lightening the toil is resorted to where there is much heavy timber. Beginning at the bottom, they slightly cut the lowest trees on the upper side only, gradually increasing the depth of the notch as they advance up the hill, until at the top of the clearing they cut the trees completely through. These fall on the row immediately below them, and by their weight knock it down; and so the felling process is continued down to the bottom. Occasionally a tangle occurs where some sturdy tree refuses to fall, and the clearing it away becomes a matter of very considerable danger. This toung-ya system is very wasteful

as well as laborious, and annually draws down upon itself the denunciations of the English forest officers. But the hill-tribes who adopt it are too few to support themselves in any other way. They were long ago driven out of the plains by the Burmans, and now cling to their old nomadic life with a degree of obstinacy which Government officials, in a variety of ways, have found is not to be tempted by any tale of the present security and plenty of the low country. Rice therefore continues to be produced with the minimum and the maximum of labour; but none of the hill rice ever finds its way out of the country, and seldom even down to the plains.

The rice season, as far as the English merchant is concerned, commences in January and ends about May; but though this is pre-eminently the "busy season," there are purchases made in greater or less quantities all the year round. The relations between the great English rice-firms and the simple jungle cultivators are not of a very elevating character, and it can hardly be denied that the fault lies wholly at the door of the foreigner. Missionaries in Burma are wont to mourn that their teachings are often rendered wholly nugatory by the want of scruple, and it might almost be said of honour, displayed by the great Rangoon rice-firms. The good padres teach their proselytes that Christians are all honest and truthful. The ingenuous lads enter as clerks in a rice-mill and discover that Englishmen scarcely differ from the "poor heathen," except in being more lordly in the way of doing the thing.

Years ago, when there were not nearly so many mills as there are now, and not a quarter so many ships in the harbour during the rice season, things went on pretty equably. One day one firm would give a rupee or so more per hundred baskets, and the next day it would be another.

But soon the mills began to increase in number and more ships came, and it was harder to get paddy. Then rival firms began to bid against each other. There was demurrage before their eyes, and it was terribly expensive work keeping the mill establishment up to its full strength. And so prices rose and rose until they became absurdly high, and no one profited but the hawks that preyed on the simple Burmese cultivators. Then the English merchants held a meeting, and all pledged themselves not to give more than the current market rate for paddy. This seemed a fair enough agreement; but after a while it was found that the boats all gravitated towards one or two firms. A little investigation showed that this was due to the fact that though they paid the ordinary rate, according to the compact, they had a smaller measuring basket than their neighbours. Accordingly every one went on reducing the size of his basket until the system became as ruinously absurd as ever it had been before. Then there was another meeting, at which it was unanimously agreed that this state of affairs would never do, and that it was absolutely necessary to come to some definite understanding. A committee was appointed which, after some deliberation, concluded that, if, in addition to abiding by the market rate, every one were bound to use a basket of a certain fixed size, there would be no chance for unfair speculations. A standard basket was therefore fixed upon; and the competitors were supposed to start fair again. But in no very long time, one firm put a false bottom in the basket, another wedged in a board; and so on till matters got back to the old way. This state of affairs is hardly creditable to mercantile honour, and it certainly is by no means profitable.

Independently of this, paddy has gone up in price at an alarming rate of late years. The first heavy rise was in

1877, at the time of the Madras famine. That was also the time of the resolution to have a standard basket. Rice was wanted in any quantity for the famine districts, and millers gave an altogether fabulous price for grain. The game went on merrily, introduced the scandalous "paddy morality," and lasted long enough to make the cultivators think the new prices had come in for good. Far too many Burmese farmers are heavily in debt to the "chetties," the money-lending caste of the Madras coast. The agriculturists have borrowed money to build a pagoda or a monastery; to give a grand feast on the occasion of their marriage, or their father's death; to buy a new yoke of oxen in the place of those that have been carried off by disease; to get seed-grain to sow their tracts of paddy-land, the last season's gains having been lost in some gambling transaction when they were down in Rangoon. They have got into the chetty's books in some way at any rate; and hapless is the man, Burman or Englishman, who has dealings with the fat, shaven-headed Madras money-lender. He will be charged eight, ten, twelve per cent. a month, or even more, before there is an end of the transaction. The chetties, therefore, took a particular interest in the rise of the price of paddy. High prices ensured their being paid; moreover, handling such unwonted sums of money made the ever-careless Burman reckless. He gambled, he gave great feasts, he got deeper and deeper into debt with the money-lenders. Consequently it was desirable that the prices should not go down; and as men of business the chetties understood how that was to be done; they made the Burman farmers hold back their grain. The Rangoon firms were in desperation to meet their contracts, the ships could not be kept waiting; and so prices were maintained at nearly famine rates. This more than anything else brought about the unlucky legerdemain

with standard baskets. The appearance of the chetty element in the trade upset everything. They are charming men of business, and know all about bulling and bearing, and all the other civilised expedients of trade. Poor "Jack Burma," listless and good-natured as he is, would never have thought of such things of himself; but he is in the hands of his master. Not a single village in the jungle, however remote, is to be found without its bare-backed money-lender. He hovers round the paddy nursery; he watches the men planting out the handfuls of half-grown rice; he makes the farmer hold back the threshed-out grain till he gives the word: then he fixes the rate and all but takes the money himself.

The English merchants have struggled against the system, but with small success. They have laid out heavy sums in advances. The farmer is paid for the next year's crop before ever it is sown. This is generally only practicable with men who have not yet fallen into the clutches of the chetties, and the result has been almost invariably to drive them into the money-lender's arms. The Burmese, it is to be feared, have not sufficient stability of character. Oo Myine or Moung Poh never had so much money before in their lives as the advances figure to. They do not know the value of it, and proceed to squander the rupees forthwith; and so, long before the paddy is delivered they are heavily in the usurer's books, and then Moung Poh and Oo Myine have to do as they are bidden. Moreover, the system in any case could hardly be a safe one. The cultivator might die; there might be a flood, or a jungle fire; many things might happen, in fact, to prevent the advance boats from ever reaching the Poozoondoung creek. Consequently many English firms have given up the practice, and instead send agents away up the creeks, far into the

jungle, to negotiate with the farmers on the spot and try to secure paddy before rivalry has had time to raise the price. But even this expedient does not answer well. The chetties do their best to throw obstacles in the way. It is not without expense, and it impresses the cultivators with a notion of the great demand there is for paddy.

The telegraph, they say, ruins business. The paddy season opens in February with a price of, say between seventy and eighty rupees a hundred baskets. The merchants declare they will not be forced into materially increasing this rate, and the home firms charter a number of ships. Meanwhile the price of paddy steadily rises, while rice in England steadily goes down; and by the time the vessels discharge their cargo in Liverpool or London, milled rice is not very much dearer in wholesale shops than the raw paddy in the Burmese boats. Very few of the rice-firms are making any money just now; yet new mills are constantly being started—which would seem contradictory, were it not that all the firms starting them have business of another kind; teak saw-mills, cotton or piece-goods trade, silks for Burmese men and maidens, or jute and grey shirtings for Upper Burma. Rice will certainly always be wanted, and there is any quantity of it to be had in Burma. Probably each firm hopes to outlast its neighbour; but in 1880, when there were constant reports of rebellions and disturbances in King Theebaw's territory, the local trade was brought to a standstill, and many a Rangoon firm looked as if it would fall; and a few actually did come down. The business will right itself in time, no doubt, but the precariousness of the trade is certainly no fault of the Burmans. A little more of the sterling probity which used to be associated with the name of the English merchant would do no harm in Rangoon

rice dealings, and would win that respect from the farmer which heavy payments and cunning never will.

The following account of English dealings with the rice after it has got out of Burman fields and boats, is from the English point of view.

Rangoon is the largest rice-port in the world. From January to May the river is crowded with shipping—huge iron and steel sailing-craft that have been chartered beforehand, and carry off thousands of bags in their capacious holds; and a constant succession of "ditchers," as the steamers passing through the Suez Canal are called, which come "seeking," and seldom have to go away without their full complement of "five parts cargo rice," or "Europe milled." Harbour-masters and river-pilots have a busy time, and gather together many pieces of silver against the later months of the year, when they will have abundant leisure to spend them. Coringi coolies swarm in the town, and their monotonous chant, "Eh-ya-mah-la Tah-ma-lay, Madras Ag-boat Tah-ma-lay," may be heard at any hour of the night or the morning, floating over the river. The British sailor overflows into the town and sings noisy old salt sea-songs round about the Soolay pagoda, gets mad drunk on arrack, and not unseldom clears Dalhousie Street with a linked-arm rush, heedless of the red-turbaned guardian of the peace, who keeps out of the way in the meantime, but will break poor drunken Jack's head with his truncheon if he finds him helpless and strayed from his fellow-roysterers.

The Poozoondoung Creek, where all the mills are, is as busy as an ant-hill all day long, and all night too, when some of the mills are lighted up with Jablochkoffs, and the silvery rays shine ghastly on the black and bronzed mill-workers. Here we have the Madrasi coolies again, making noises, according to their nature, as a kind of

assertion that they are doing hard work. The lank Chittagonian firemen, with their aquiline noses, are coated with coal-dust, and divide their time between firing up and having a whiff at the hubble-bubble when Sandy, the Scotch engineer, is not looking. There is a cluster of Chinese carpenters, chipping away with their queer thick-headed axes and planes, which, with characteristic perversity, they pull towards them, instead of pushing away as other workmen do. Here is M——, the English "assistant" at the mill, his hat and coat all covered with rice-dust, which hangs in queer fashion on his eyebrows and moustache. He is in high spirits. "We've got twenty-four pair of stones going to-day, more than anybody else in the creek;" and he goes off to see how the Burmese girls are stitching up the rice-bags, a duty of which he is particularly fond, and over which he spends a quite unnecessary amount of time. There is R——'s voice on the other side of the creek. He is storming at some men in the cargo-boat, who have done something wrong—anchored in the wrong place, or not started for the upper mill at Kemmindine last night as they ought to have done. R—— has a voice which is the terror of every loitering coolie and dawdling boat-wallah in his employ; and he will be as hoarse as a North Sea pilot by nightfall, and will want a "double-barrelled" whisky and soda to moisten him before dinner. He wants company down to "the Point," and presently comes skimming across in his gig, manned by Chittagonian Kalassies, and we drop down the creek—they call small rivers creeks in the East—to where it joins with the main Rangoon stream. The Pegu river, tapping the country east and north of Rangoon, comes in at the same place; and there is a great crowd of paddy-boats here in the early morning. Each firm has its brokers, middlemen who make the purchases from

the farmers that come down with their grain. They have been here since daylight, and fly about in their little dug-outs from one seller to another. The great point in a broker seems to be power of lungs and fluency in abuse. The amount of yelling that goes on at "Monkey Point" would silence the book-makers' ring at Epsom on a Derby-day.

R—— has not come down to this pandemonium for nothing. There are a couple of big ships in, which must be filled, or there will be demurrage to pay, and a "canal-wallah" is expected this afternoon, or to-morrow morning; so that the wheels must be kept going their hardest. Accordingly, we paddle about here and there, and whenever we come across the little canoe flying the flag that marks R——'s brokers, sundry signs pass, which result in three great paddy-boats mounting the red flag too. They presently weigh anchor, and drop up to the mill. R—— is a smart man of business, and is very scornful about the representatives of several other firms, who lounge on the bank, smoking cheroots, and throwing sticks into the water for their dogs to fetch out. It is not directly a matter of money that is in question. The cultivators know pretty well what they are about, though you might not think it when you hear a man refuse ninety-two rupees a hundred baskets, and afterwards settle with a broker for eighty-eight. Those passes with the finger on the nose meant a good deal more than appeared. Another brick in the bottom of the basket, a three-inch batten wedged in somewhere, was the significance of that wink which sent the broker off in such a hurry.

At last it is over. There are no more boats to be had; and we are not sorry to turn back, for the sun throws its beams fiercely back from the water in a way that gets below the broadest solah hat. R—— is in great glee:

"Thirteen boats, by George! Next best to the Imperial Firm; and then there's the launch to come back." The Imperial Firm is the biggest concern in Rangoon, and has sometimes as much as a lakh out for "advance boats," *i.e.* money paid to cultivators before the rice has been planted out from the nurseries, or pehaps even before it has been sown at all. The launch about which R—— is so solicitous went away last night far up the Pegu River to intercept boats coming down with paddy for sale. There are sometimes great bargains to be made in this way. The boatmen have come a long distance, and are tired with paddling. The tide is making strong when the steam-launch comes up. There is the welcome prospect of an end to their labours, and above all there are no outbidding rivals to interfere. R—— instituted the system, and for a day or two had the game all to himself; but now the other firms have got wind of it, and there are sometimes famous races for a big boat, which must somewhat astonish the simple jungle wallahs, and certainly do not reduce the demands of the hlay shin, the owner of the boat. R—— is in luck this morning. We have hardly gone a hundred yards when the "Mah Hlah" comes puffing round the point behind us, with a boat on either side, and three towing astern.

And now we have got back to the mill. The Burmans are discharging their paddy, which is stowed in bulk, into a big cargo-boat. The regulation basket is in use, and we do not peer too inquisitively into the bottom of it. The owner of the boat is perched on the lofty carved stern of his craft, and placidly smokes a great cheroot. Presently he will come down and make his way to the office, where he will get a great pile of rupees to carry off, tied in the end of his pasoh. The greater number of them will probably find their way into the hands of the

oily chetty, who is squatting on the bank there. The rest our hlay shin will most likely gamble away.

Meanwhile, a long string of coolies is carrying the paddy from the lighter into the godown, a gigantic shed, where there is already a mountain of grain. We skirt round it, and go to the other side. There a few hundred more coolies are running off with more baskets to the mill. The paddy is thrown into huge receptacles on the basement, winnowed, carried up in lifts to the top of the house, three stories high, where it is first of all passed over a long sieve. Here the stalks, leaves, stones, and stumps of cheroots are separated from the grain, which is then passed between two revolving stones, just sufficiently wide apart to grind off the outer husk without breaking the seed. Then it is rewinnowed in fanners, and passed over finer sieves, where the broken grains fall through, while the part-cleaned rice goes on to fresh stones. It is found that perfectly clean rice will not stand the long sea voyage, and the grain as it is sent in the sailing ship has still the inner pellicle, and is mixed with about twenty per cent. of unhusked rice. This is what is technically known as "five parts cargo rice," or simply "cargo rice." Since so many steamers have begun to go through the Suez Canal, the amount of "white rice" milled in the province has been steadily increasing. Rice of a specially fine quality, with a glaze on the surface, is manufactured for Italy. Clouds of rice-dust float all over the mill, and settle everywhere, making queer spectacles of the dark-skinned Madrasis. The dust is carefully swept up, and sold to Chinamen, who fatten their pigs upon it. The milled grain descends to the ground-floor again, and pours in a stream through shoots into bags standing ready on weighing machines. There is a crowd of Burmese girls ready to sew them up as they are filled, and another band of

coolies to carry them off in the cargo-boats ready to convey them to the ships away up in the Rangoon harbour. Paddy that came in a Burmese boat in the morning may by night be safe stowed in the shape of milled rice deep down in the hold of a ship bound "to the Channel for orders." Everything is used but the paddy-husk. That is passed out from the fanners, and pours in a great stream from wooden shoots into the creek. There it floats backwards and forwards with the tide, and creates miasma and narrows the river; still no other feasible means of getting rid of it has yet been devised. Several engineers and others in Rangoon have tried special furnaces for consuming the husk, but with no very great measure of success. Mr. Cowie's system is probably the best; but it requires a special kind of boiler and furnace, and has not as yet been generally adopted. The economy in fuel as well as the advantage to the river would be immense if the scheme were perfected.

And so we have seen the paddy sown out and mown, and passing from the hands of the cultivators, through the mills, into the great ships that carry the rice away to all parts of the world.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A GRACIOUS PLOUGHING.

LIKE the "royal elder brother" of China, the king of Burma ought to go out once a year to plough the fields. Theebaw Min did not do it during the first two years of his reign, and, as far as I am aware, was equally heedless of ancient custom in 1881 also. The consequences ought to have been disastrous. According to tradition the failure of the Let-twin mingala to come off should have caused a drought all over the country. But the moh-hkoung did not ensue; on the contrary there was moh-koung: an aspirate makes all the difference between a water-famine and seasonable showers. King Theebaw goes very little indeed out of his palace. The annals of the country supply too many instances of kings, who, having gone abroad, found on their return to the palace gates that a usurper had taken possession of the throne in the meantime, and had no better greeting for his predecessor than a short shrift and a red velvet sack in which to plunge his body into the Irrawaddy. This unlovable custom has had great weight with king Theebaw; but it is unwise of him to entirely abandon so venerable a tradition as the Let-twin mingala. It was at this ceremonial that one of the earliest marvels in the life of the Buddha Gautama happened. The king Thoodawdana, with eight hundred

noblemen save one, was ploughing the fields at the annual festival. Many country people came to see the great sight, and the city emptied itself. The maids who had charge of the little Prince Thei-dat laid him down under the shade of a tree and went to look on. The infant Buddha rose up as soon as they were gone, and sitting cross-legged in the fashion in which he is ordinarily represented in the images, became sunk in meditation. The careless maids all through the hot afternoon forgot about their princely charge, until the returning crowds and the setting sun reminded them of their neglect. Then they hurried to the tree and found that the Zampoo thabyay had maintained its shadow in the exact same position all day as it was in when Prince Thei-dat was first laid down. Notwithstanding the arc the sun had described the shade had all along hung over the head of the meditating Payah Aloung.

The festival has therefore special reason to be celebrated by the descendants of the solar kings. It was also in every way a most picturesque fête, pleased the people, and offered a valuable opportunity for squeezing money out of them. The late king, Mindohn Min, never omitted it, even when he was grown old and portly, and little able to follow the slow-stepping bullocks. The ceremony took place in the beginning of June, about the time when the south-west monsoon usually breaks in Mandalay. The order went forth that the king would come out on such and such a day, and the people were enjoined to get ready. Not to see him—far from it. The right of a cat to look at a king in Mandalay is not well established. The Amehn-daw was issued in order that the heads over ten houses, the Tsè-ehng-goungs, might see that the road in their district was in proper repair, and that the yazamat had not got out of order. The yazamat, or king's fence, is a kind

of lattice-paling put up in every street in the walled town, and in any of those in the suburbs through which the king is likely at any time to pass. It is formed of thick diagonal spars made into hurdles, which are lashed to heavy posts sunk in the ground at regular intervals. The whole is whitewashed, and often flower-pots stand on the top of the posts to enliven the structure a little; and it certainly wants enlivening a good deal. The lattice-fence undoubtedly looks very neat and tidy, as a long, straight road lined with Lombardy poplars does; but it gets terribly tiresome, when you find all the streets looking exactly the same, with this six-foot-high heavy wood fence standing within a couple of feet or so of the walls of the houses, and shutting out all view of these wooden structures. It has, however, to be kept in constant repair, and the house-reeve has to go round carefully to see that none of the whitewash has been rubbed off, nor any of the transverse bars sprung with the sun. Behind these the entire populace must stay when the king, or any one of the queens, goes out. Woe betide the wretch who is caught outside them when the procession has started. He may consider himself lucky if he escapes with only a belabouring from the fasces of the shrieking lictors. No one is supposed even to look through the little diamond-shaped holes. As a matter of fact they do; but by way of condoning for the offence, they render it more difficult by planting flowering shrubs between the bamboo houses and the lattice-work.

The procession on the route out to the let-yá, the royal acre, to be ploughed, is magnificent. The king is clad in all his robes of state: the pasoh with the doung-yohp, the peacock sacred to royalty; the long silk surcoat, or tunic, so thickly crusted with jewels that its colour cannot be seen; the tharapoo, the spire-like crown, also a mass of

precious stones; the twenty-four strings of the Order of the Saluè across his breast; and over his forehead the gold plate, or frontlet. The great gates at the foot of the stairs from the Hall of Audience are opened for him. Except the King of the Golden Throne no one may pass through them; there is the low red postern at the side for meaner beings—a shrewd device to make every one bow his head to the palace, whether he likes it or not. His majesty mounts the white elephant, which none save he can ride—for is not the noble creature a king himself?

The king mounts the Lord White Elephant at the palace of the latter, just in front of the Hall of Audience; but the princes and ministers, all of whom come to attend the great function in their robes of state, may not ascend their cattle till the stockade of the nandaw has been passed. Then they fall into line in order of precedence, the woons and woondouks wearing their official mitres—tall red velvet hats, with the top curled back like a nautilus, and the base surrounded with a row of gilt spear-heads. The long crimson velvet cassocks edged with rich brocade are also worn, and every one parades all the umbrellas, gold, or vermilion, or green, that he is entitled to.

Thus they pass through the official town into the suburbs. The road taken is that by the east gate, whence, in a line with the steps of the Hall of Audience, a broad way runs straight away to the blue Shan hills; or at least to where, in the late king's reign, the great Yankeen-toung pagoda was being built, a few miles from where the hills rise, steep as out of a lake, from the flat rice lands. A death-like stillness prevails after the procession has passed the two timber guard-houses, between the tall columns of the eastern gate, surmounted by fantastic, triple-roofed teak pavilions, looking like Chinese joss-houses with their flamboyant carvings. The people are no doubt all there—

we speak as those who know—crouching on their stomachs and peeping as best they can through yazamat and leaves of the bushes and legs of the soldiers that line the royal path all the way, striving their utmost to get a glimpse of the king and the splendour of his retinue; but they are not to be seen, and no one so much as sneezes. Thus the richly carved and gilt royal monastery is passed on the left; and immediately afterwards comparatively open ground is reached, stretching out on either side of the high, raised road. A little farther on, half a mile or so from the eastern gate, a halt is made at the selected portion of the let-daw-gyee. Ploughs stand ready in a long row, extending away as far as one can see; for all the princes and ministers must plough as well as the king. The royal plough is thickly covered with gold leaf; the part on which his majesty stands—for it must not be forgotten that the Burmese plough is something like a giant rake, and is not really a plough to English ideas at all—is gold, roughened with pearls and emeralds. The milk-white oxen that draw it rival the Lord White Elephant in the splendour of their harness. Crimson and gold bands hook them on; the reins are stiff with rubies and diamonds; heavy gold tassels hang from the gilded horns. The gold-tipped ox-goad his majesty wields is covered with jewels and flashes like a rod of fire in the sun.

The king ploughs a couple of furrows—or, rather, passes the big rake once up and down the rain-sodden field—and then stops; for he is portly, and short of breath now. The ministers, no matter how fat they are, have to go on ploughing as long as the Arbiter of Existence chooses to look on. At last he declares that enough has been done, and preparations are made to go back again. He doffs his royal robes, for the tharapoo, with its spire and jewelled ear-flappets, is burdensome, and the long surcoat, with its

thousands of precious stones, is said to weigh about a hundred pounds. The Lord White Elephant is relieved too. He stalks back unencumbered, with his household of thirty retainers fussing about him with fans and swaying umbrellas.

The king gets into an open car, something like what Roman racing chariots are represented to have been. It is of course adorned as richly as everything else, and is drawn not by ponies or bullocks, but by men, eight of them pulling at each of the flexible shafts. The object is to prevent any one, the driver for example, sitting higher than the king. The English carriages presented at various times to different Burmese monarchs met with little approval. At first it was thought that the king was to sit on the box; but then it was found that with this arrangement there was nothing for it but that the driver should run by the side and therefore maintain a constant erect attitude in the presence of royalty. When it was found that the king was supposed to sit inside, with the driver two or three feet above him, a burst of indignation suggested that it was an insidious plot to put an insult on the majesty of the lord of the umbrella-bearing chiefs. For a time the vehicles were put away as lumber; but an ingenious handicraftsman adorned them with pya-thats—five-roofed ecclesiastical, or royal spires. They were now, when drawn by men, suitable for royal occupation; but unfortunately the solid teak-wood spires made them top-heavy, and especially unstable on rough Mandalay roads. They have therefore degenerated into paraphernalia for exhibition on a kadaw day, or gauds for a procession at Tawadehntha feast time.

The king consequently returns on his low, gilt, native-made carriage, reclining on a mattress placed on the floor. He is now dressed in the ordinary national way, with a

light linen jacket and a slender paw-lohn (a fillet of book-muslin wound round the head), showing the thin white hair tied up in a little knot on the top of the head. The chief ministers are round about, fanning him assiduously; and he is in extreme good-humour, chaffing the Kin Woon-gyee, the astute prime minister, on the way he let his bullocks straggle away at random and the difficulties he got into in trying to turn them at the end of the field; while the stout old Naingan-gya Woon-douk is rallied about the absurd state of heat he was brought into by his exertions. Possibly, if a venturesome and inquisitive subject were to be seen now, the king might pardon him for his rude gaping. But nobody knows in what temper the king is, and the silence is as death-like as when the party moved out. As soon, however, as the great procession has passed and has wound its way into the palace, the hitherto deserted streets are crowded again. Pwès begin with startling suddenness at every corner. Bands strike up; long lines of candles illuminate the streets at nightfall; rockets are let off, fire-balloons ascend, and everything is given up to rejoicing; for the let-daw-gyee has been graciously ploughed, and the let-twin mingala is a presage of abundant crops.

CHAPTER XXV.

A HARVEST FEAST.

ONE of the pleasantest and most social of Burmese country festivals is the ceremony which goes by the name of Tamanè Htoh-thee. It occurs in the month of Ta'soungmohn, or of Na'daw, when the harvest is over and the first of the new rice piled up in a heap near the farmer's house, or perhaps stowed away in the capacious bottom of the hnaw, the big rice-boat, with its stern rising ten or fifteen feet above the surface of the water, and ready to start for Rangoon whenever its owner shall have hit upon a lucky day for commencing the voyage. In order to acquire a store of merit as well towards the next existence as towards the journey immediately in view; to back up the verdict of the astrologer from the horoscope with the good wishes of the holy men of the monastery; and, above all, to have a feast such as generally comes in somewhere in all Burmese religious proceedings, the cultivator resolves to give away twenty baskets or so of rice in alms and presents to the yellow-robed monks and his neighbours. A special kind of rice is always used on these occasions. Englishmen generally are unaware probably that there are a great number of varieties of rice, and that they differ very much in their

flavour. Most people imagine that all rice has the same taste (no taste they would probably say); and distinguish in a rough material way between Patna rice, which is very small, and Rangoon rice, which is considerably larger in the grain, and finally Carolina rice, which is bigger than any of them. A Rangoon merchant would go a little farther, and say that there are two varieties—the nga-sehn, which he likes best and gets most of, and the nga-kyouk, which comes in more sparingly. But beyond these —and they are not the varieties most in favour with the Burmese for their own consumption—there are at least thirty different kinds. There is the byat sabah, the "tray" rice, which is considered the best, but like most of the other sorts, will not stand the rough treatment of the steam mill-stones, and breaks in pieces. Then there is the myee-shay, which has a long awn, and the myee-tohn, which has no awn at all; the toung-pyan, "winged rice," and the nga-chwè, "buffalo grain"; and so on through a long list, ending up with "black rice," which is not by any means bad eating. But of all the kinds, kouk-hnyin, "sticky rice," is the variety always used at the harvest feast. It is mixed with thin sliced cocoa-nut, sesamum seeds, ginger, onions and pepper, all stirred together and well boiled; and the resulting mess is called tamanè. The rice is well named. It is very emphatically sticky, and even when taken alone is not very easily digested; but when it comes in the form of tamanè, the result is usually a widespread attack of colic throughout the village. This, however, comes after the festival, when the fun is all over, and does not concern us in any way.

When the farmer has made up his mind as to the day on which he is going to have the feast—a date which, of course, cannot be settled without consulting the wise men of the village and much pondering over the palm-leaf

horoscope—he sends out a few boys with a number of packets of "pickled tea" to all the young men in the place, requesting them to be good enough to eat it and to come without fail that night to his homestead in order to help him to husk his rice for the tamanè htoh-thee. A few girls are also asked to come; and they bring their friends for the sake of company, and the mothers follow for the sake of propriety. Thus there is quite a large assemblage at the farmer's when night falls and the business is to commence. There is a good deal of preliminary tea-drinking and smoking of cheroots and chewing of betel and le'hpet, and a great deal of laughing and talking. The girls profess to be astonished to find so many young men there; they had not imagined their host was meditating such expensive preparations, and thought there would be nobody there but his own and his wife's younger brothers. That is exactly what they will say next week when they attend a similar assemblage at Htohn Oung's house at the other end of the village.

But after an hour or so they settle down to do a little work. The young men—kahla-thahs, they call themselves—"Corinthians, lads of mettle"—have brought with them a number of wooden mortars, with the heavy pestle working on a lever; and these they set up and commence to husk the rice. The process is very simple. A few handfuls of the paddy are thrown into the mortar, the workers step off and on the lever which raises and lets fall the solid wooden pestle, and the husk is every now and then blown out and the grain stirred up a little. The Burmans infinitely prefer rice husked in the national way to that which is sent out from the European steam-mills. The big Derbyshire or composite stones do their work only too effectually; they take off not only the hard shell, but also the inner cuticle of the grain, which contains the chief

flavour; and, moreover, the heat which the steady grinding induces, scorches out a great deal of what taste remains. Therefore at every house there is to be found the primitive national apparatus in which the girls of the household every morning or evening prepare the rice for the day's consumption. But to-night they are relieved from such hard work. The village youths for once in a way exert themselves; and all the girls have to do is to wash out a few dishes and prepare the bamboo-lacquered platters, the pyramidal okes, in which the tamanè is to be carried to the yahans and the pagoda to-morrow, and get ready the palm-leaves in which less exalted people will receive their modicum of the stew. The whole actual work might be finished in little over an hour, but that is the intention neither of the giver of alms nor of the assembled young men and maidens. They have come much more for merriment than for merit. Else why that great pile of le'hpet? For the condiment is an antisoporific, and if you take enough of it, you will be able to see all through a forty-eight hours' play, and give your friends an outline of the plot before you lapse into a slumber lasting twice round the clock.

Accordingly, after a quarter of an hour's work, the "prince" of the local amateur drâmatic company jumps off his perch, and commences the "White Dove" song from the Zawtagohmma melodrama, which the old sayah at Pegu has just brought out, and which is having a tremendous run all through the low country. The song is about the Saddan mere, the lake of the Lord White Elephant, where golden lotuses flower perpetually, where the gorgeous yin-dwin bird sails on the silvery waters, great butterflies flap about with painted wings, and sip the nectar of the fabled jasmine, and peacocks stalk proudly on the jewelled margin, while around roam elephants white,

red, and black in happy security. The singer has hardly finished when the loo-byet, the village jester, breaks in with a travesty of the whole thing, mocking at the tremolos and the lofty style, and taking off the peculiarities of the singer. He went out to a lake too, and launched a canoe on it, but he was capsized by a huge creature that came up from below; and then he found that he had got into a slimy buffalo-wallow, out of which he only escaped after great peril from the horns of its three outraged owners, who butted him under the surface many times; and at last, when he crawled out, he was so brown and dirty that some passers-by took him for a hermit, and gave him some rotten plantains in alms. Before the "prince" has time to show any bad temper, a girl commences a coquettish ditty, somewhat after the fashion of the English "Paddle my own canoe," about a poor wife whose husband comes home and storms and growls and abuses because there is no rice ready cooked, softens down when he has crammed himself with curry and rice, but breaks out into grumbling again at night because his wife cries and will not go to sleep. Such tyranny the young lady declares she will never expose herself to, or at any rate "she'll be no submissive wife." Then there are a few love-songs, wherein the girls are compared with the maids of the palace in Mandalay, and the Mandalay girls generally (who are *ex officio* pretty) with the daughters of nats, with Madee, the model wife of Waythandaya (the prince who in his next existence became the Lord Buddha), with flowers and stars and gems, and whatever similes lovers all the world over are in the habit of making. The swaying of the body as they walk, the turning in of the elbows, the fragrant powder on their cheeks and necks, and a few other items which would not commend themselves to a Western admirer, are recorded with enthusiasm

and delighted precision of detail; and when an hour or so has been passed in this way, a little more rice-husking is done, and the girls set to work getting ready the onions and sesamum seed, and slicing up the cocoa-nut kernels. This sort of thing goes on all the night through. There is half an hour's work, and then an hour of singing and story-telling and gossip; about the great Shin-bin-tha-young, the gigantic recumbent image of Shin Gautama dug up lately near Pegu; of the two min-loungs, the embryo kings, who have been revealed there, and the third one, who is foretold by the old theht-sah, the prophecy which declares that he will restore the ancient Talaing kings and revive religion; of the new htee which is being set up on the pagoda of the lotos tank, and its exceeding splendour, each single one of the concentric rings having been assigned as a particular favour to one out of many competing districts. Then there is a discussion as to the new fashion of turbans, the one plain colour with worked flowers on it, which has supplemented the old thinner style with more braid-like patterns; and the present rage for waist-cloths with many-coloured stripes in place of the old wavy and dog's tooth fashion. Then the girls are rallied about the method in which they dress their hair—all of them in the style just declared treasonable in the upper country. Queen Soo-payah-lat has hit upon some particular set, or plaiting of her tresses which she thinks becomes her very well, and a royal order has come out making it penal for any meaner damsels to adopt the same method. Consequently all the maidens from Toung-oo to Kyouk-Hpyoo and the A-eng Pass to Malawoon have made up after the queenly model and flatter themselves that it is *chic*. There are always ghost stories at these gatherings, tales about the three farmer brothers that were killed just after harvest time three years ago, and

now haunt the dense patch of swampy jungle down by the creek as nat sehns, and sometimes scare the fishermen out of a night's work by the violent agitation of the tree tops on a still night; and then there is that old hag in the lone house at the far end of the village, who is certainly a witch; it must have been she who gave the old sikkè the tet, poor old man, and he a payah-tagah too, founder of the pagoda on the slope of the "Brother and Sister Hill"; and there is little Mah Mee; the old beldam looked at her over the fence on the fifth of last waning, and the poor thing lost her sweetheart before the change of the moon, and had all her fine false hair stolen only three days ago: proof enough that of the *jettatura*.

It is long past midnight, when all the cocks of the village crow together, deriving their knowledge of the exact time from the diet of burnt astrological books, pecked at by their ancestors long ago, when the objection to cabalistic works was much more violent than it is now-a-days; and sometimes daylight is coming in, and the sound of the morning chant steals over from the monastery, when the party breaks up and all go home. The kouk hnyin has been all husked, and, mixed up with the other ingredients, is simmering away over the fire. Every one has a virtuous consciousness of having gained considerable koothoh in addition to having spent a very agreeable time. Few go to sleep. They have eaten too much le'hpet for that, and in an hour or two, some of them will be wanted again to take the tamanè round. That is done about eight o'clock in the case of the monks. The farmer himself and his family carry it to the monastery in the spire-shaped lacquer-box, and having paid the usual reverence, deposit it before the superior, who looks on calmly without a word of thanks, or even the semblance of a recognition, but says before they go, that if they keep the Ten Precepts and live

virtuously, they will escape the Four States of Punishment and be delivered from the Five Enemies. Then the "supporters" wheel on the right, and depart home to make up the portions for all their friends and neighbours. These are usually taken round by the girls, who go in bevies of three or four, dressed in their finest clothes and with flowers in their hair, and deliver the dainty with compliments, and injunctions to eat it immediately. By six o'clock in the evening, when the sonorous wooden bell of the monastery is summoning in all the scholars, the entire village is asleep; and they do not get up very early next morning. Nobody in the whole place has been drunk; and if there is an opium-eater in the village, he was not asked to the feast and had none of the tamanè.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SILK-GROWING.

REARING silkworms, though a very profitable occupation, is not looked upon with any favour in Burma. To get the silk the pupa must be killed; and the taking of life in any form is an impiety always looked upon with great horror by all good Buddhists. Silk-growers are classed together with professional hunters and fishermen. The Four States of Punishment yawn for them, and their portion will be in the lowest abyss of the lowest hell. Still there are colonies of silk-growers in various parts of the country; but they live apart from the rest of the inhabitants as a rule, and often have entire villages to themselves. Colonel Horace Browne, who more than any other Englishman has taken an interest in the ways and occupations of the districts under his charge, states that the cultivators near Prome, where more silk is produced than in any part of Burma, are nearly all Yabehns—a race of the same stock as the Burmese, but despised by them independently of their crime in the way of habitually taking animal life. So much has the cultivation of silk become identified with them, that to Burman ears the term Yabehn is virtually synonymous with that of silk-grower. They usually live on the hill-sides, occupying themselves like the poorer Burmans and

Karens, with toung-ya cultivation; burning the forests on the slopes and sowing the ground thus enriched with the wood-ashes, with rice, cotton, or oil-seed. The system is viewed with very little approval by the government officials, for the toung-ya soil, hardly exhausted by the single crop raised off it, immediately produces a dense shrub-growth of no use to anybody, certainly not to the foresters. Silk raising is therefore encouraged as a means of stopping the ruination of the timber. It is a very simple matter, involving the least possible amount of toil, and at the same time being on the whole very profitable. Moreover, the Burmese mulberry-bush, which is quite distinct from the ordinary *Morus Indica*, does not grow well on the alluvial soil of the low lands, while it flourishes on the hill-sides, where the Yabehns mostly live. The silk obtained from the caterpillars fed on the leaves of the hill-shrubs is very much better than that obtained from the mulberry-bushes of the plains. Thus it happens that all parties are likely to be pleased. The English Government foresters will gradually find means of putting an end to the timber burning which they detest; the richer Burmans down in the lowlands will neither have the temptation to increase their income at the expense of their piety, nor will they have that piety shocked by an organised system of taking life; while the Yabehns in their own hill-villages will be allowed to do as they please, and will accumulate tidy sums of money into the bargain.

It is certain that neither the silkworm nor the mulberry-bush are indigenous in Burma. It is said that the first cocoons were brought from China in the reign of King Anawrata Saw. Others again maintain that the Chinese taught the Shans, the Shans the Karens, and these the Burmese. In some places among the more superstitious hill-tribes the mulberry-tree receives a kind of worship. In

any case it is more probable that both the silkworm and the tree were introduced from Western China, down the valley of the Irrawaddy or the Salween, than that they came over the hills, through turbulent mountaineers, from India. The shrub does not grow much more than ten feet high, and seldom produces good succulent leaves for a longer period than three years. After that the plants are apt to get coarse and stringy, and the cultivators ordinarily abandon the plantation, or root out the bushes and plant new ones. As the shrub will not flower it is propagated by cuttings, and new shoots are constantly being planted so that there may be an unfailing supply of young and fresh leaves. The Burmans call it the poh-sah-bin, "the tree the silkworms eat." There is another tree—that from the bark of which the coarse paper used for the para-baik, or note-books, is got—the leaves of which the caterpillars will eat; but the silk thus obtained is much coarser, and recourse is had therefore to the ma-hlaing-bin only when the mulberry-bushes give out. In any case, however, it is undeniable that, as yet, the silk produced in Burma is of a very inferior kind. It is rough and coarse; but it is all the better suited for the strong lohn-gyees and pasohs in use for ordinary every-day wear among the people, the finer fabrics all coming from China or Manchester.

The whole process of growing the silk is of the simplest possible character, and is exactly suited to indolent people who have no conscientious objections to the killing of the pupæ. Silk can, indeed, be spun from the cocoons, out of which the moths have escaped; but it is very much coarser even than the ordinary silk, and commands somewhat less than half the price. Except the occasional trouble of strolling out for a few leaves, there is almost nothing to be done; and the whole operations are carried on in the rickety bamboo hut of the cultivator, within a

yard or two of the place where his food is cooked. The caterpillars do not seem to care a bit for the smoke or the dirt; and the pupæ are equally callous to the fumes of tobacco which circle about them constantly during the few days that remain to them before they are stewed. The female moths are placed upon pieces of coarse cloth, with palm-leaf lids put over them. The eggs stick to the cloth, and form a compact little circle. A day or two over a week suffices to produce the larvæ, and these are then thrown upon flat trays, made of strips of bamboo plaited closely together, and guarded by a slightly raised edge. For four or five days the little caterpillars are fed on finely-chopped mulberry-leaves, the tenderest that can be found. After that they change their skins, and, beyond getting plenty of leaves, do not receive much attention. They are sturdy creatures, and they would need to be, for they are often very roughly treated. The trays are scarcely ever cleaned, and if the larvæ are to be shifted from one tray to another, they are scraped up in handfuls and thrown down as if they were so many chips of wood. Gauze, or mosquito netting is usually thrown over the trays to keep away the ichneumon flies, which otherwise would deposit their eggs in the silkworm's back and kill him. In about a month's time the caterpillar is full grown. He is then bundled into a fresh tray, in which there lies, wound about in the form of a spiral, a narrow-plaited bamboo strip. The ripe larvæ are thrown into this with as little ceremony as if they were pebbles. In about a day's time they have spun their cocoons, fastening them to the strips of bamboo. These are torn off and kept in baskets for a day or two, when a pot with water in it is filled with the pupæ, and then set to simmer over a slow wood fire.

From a triangle over the pot is suspended a small bamboo reel, and down below, near the pot, is a wooden

cylinder. The reeler is usually a girl. She fishes about for a time in the simmering vessel, and, catching a few threads of silk, passes them over the reel and down to the cylinder, to which they are fastened. She then turns the handle of the cylinder, winding on the silk, and at the same time constantly fishing up and fastening on new filaments, which she does by means of a light bamboo double-pronged fork. Not the least trouble is taken to keep the silk clean. Any rubbish that may be floating on the surface of the water is wound on to the cylinder without an attempt being made to disengage it. When all the silk has been got off the cocoons, and wound on to the cylinder, the pupæ are taken out of the water and fried in oil to furnish a dish for the family dinner. They are not by any means unpleasant, tasting, barring the oil, very much like roasted chestnuts; and indeed the dish is considered a great dainty.

The silk-growers mostly sell their silk. A loom is to be found in almost every Burman's house in the country; and in Prome and Shway-doung, as being close to the place where the silk is produced, great quantities of articles of dress are made for sale. The native-grown silk is only used for everyday clothes of simple patterns, the more elaborate being all worked from imported Chinese silk. The silk is bought raw, the separate filaments twisted into a thread by means of a wheel, and then made up into hanks; these are boiled in soap and water, and are then ready for the dye. The commonest colours are green, yellow, orange, different shades of red and light blue; black and dark blue are only in favour with the Shans. The dyes are obtained from various jungle seeds, roots, flowers, leaves, and barks; the yellow dye obtained from the wood of the Jack-tree (*Artocarpus integrifolia*) being reserved for the monkish robes. After being dyed, the thread is unwound again. The weaving machine is very much like the old

hand-loom still occasionally seen in out-of-the-way parts of England. The operators are almost always young women, and they are very clever at working the treadle and shooting through the shuttle, while talking all the time to village gossips or admiring swains. Some of the tamehns, made for the richer women, are extremely intricate in pattern and require between twenty and thirty shuttles. The treadle raises and lowers the alternate threads of the warp. Except the rough dresses and the most complicated in pattern, however, not many native-made clothes are worn now. The townspeople prefer the showy and cheaper imported articles, and, though the Manchester goods are too frequently "doctored" and do not last long, yet this does not trouble the Burman much, for he is fond of a change of dress, and, unless he is very poor, will never wear a pasoh, except about the house, after it has been washed. All the more elaborate designs are, however, native made. The "dog's-tooth" pattern is almost confined to Mandalay court looms. The a-chit pasoh or tamehn, of a complicated, wavy, sprigged design, which middle-aged Burmans remember as being the cherished object of desire of their young days, is now considered rustic. Young Rangoon will tell you that you may always know a taw-thah (a jungle wallah), at the pagoda feast by his wearing an a-chit pasoh and nothing else except his turban; and although the waist-cloth may cost from 150 to 400 rupees, that does not redeem it in the town-bred youth's eyes.

CHAPTER XXVII.

LACQUER WARE.

For a long time it was assumed that Japanese and Chinese lacquered goods were simply papier-mâché. A popular fancy for the ware has brought to the knowledge of all who care for the information that it is really wood of different kinds painted over with the juice of the urushi tree. Should fashion ever inspire a similar enthusiasm for Burmese productions of the same kind, it is probable that it may be supposed that these also are composed of solid wood, and people will wonder at the extreme thinness and flexibility of the finer specimens. But it is only the coarsest ware which is thus produced. All the better boxes and cups are made of a woven basket-work of strips of bamboo; the varnish used on them is, like the Japanese lacquer, the sap obtained from the stem of a tree, and has nothing whatever to do with the insect-produced lac, such as English varnishers employ in solution with alcohol. I am not botanist enough to know whether the urushi (*Rhus vernicefera*), the Japanese tree, is identical with the Burman thi'see (*Melanorrhœa usitatissima*), or even whether it is of the same genus or order. Thi'see (literally wood-oil) is dark in colour from the moment it is gathered, whereas the urushi sap is described as being

light yellow when first extracted, and only turning black after considerable exposure to the air. The urushi has been cultivated by royal order for hundreds of years in Japan, but in Burma no one troubles himself much about national manufactures, and the thi'see-bin grows wild in the jungle; and not even near Nyoung-oo, where nearly every household in the town is occupied in the trade, not even there do I remember seeing a regular plantation of the tree. Nevertheless it is plentiful enough, and affords a magnificent spectacle when it is in flower—a huge forest tree covered so thickly with creamy-white blossoms that the leaves cannot be seen. The flowers have a fragrant scent not unlike that of apples, and the needy and practical Burman often makes a very acceptable curry of the buds. In full-grown trees the average height to the first branch is thirty feet, and the ordinary girth six feet from the ground is nine feet. Charcoal-burners have a predilection for the wood, which would not meet with approval in Japan; and it is much used for anchors and tool-helves, being very close and fine-grained. It is too heavy to float when green, but dried it is not particularly weighty. The sap may be collected at all times, except when the fruit is on the trees, from Pyatho to Taboung—the first three months of the English year. Then it is thin and does not produce such a brilliant polish. The mode of collection is simple enough. Incisions are made in the stem, and the sap trickles into bamboos placed to catch it. When it is to be kept any time there must be a depth of two or three inches of water on the top, otherwise it would dry up and become solid. The water, however, does not improve it. The best varnish, called thi'see a-young tin, is that which has been just drawn from the tree; the second quality contains twenty-five per cent. of water, the inferior as much as fifty.

The articles lacquered are chiefly drinking-cups and betel-boxes, the latter consisting of a cylindrical inner case, in which are fitted two or three trays for holding the lime, betel-vine leaves, cutch, nuts, and other ingredients for betel-chewing, the whole covered by an outer lid reaching to the bottom of the inner case. Ordinary kohn-itt, betel-boxes, are three or four inches high and two and a half to three in diameter. Articles of the same shape are made of all sizes up to a couple of feet or more in height, these last being used for holding clothes and women's working materials. The bee-itt, ladies' toilet-boxes, are often the most delicate and carefully worked. The actresses always carry splendid specimens about with them to contain their combs, oil, scent, the white lead and thana'kha for the complexion, and a few tresses of false hair. Other articles are the pyramidal tamin-sah oht, used for carrying food to the monasteries and the pagodas, fashioned somewhat in the style of the sacred spires of five or seven roofs, and of all sizes from eighteen inches to the huge things, the height of a man, which the king sends under the royal umbrellas to the Arakan pagoda in Mandalay. Byat, platters of all sizes, up to the gigantic circular tray as big as a small table, used for dishing up the family dinner, are always made of wood, like the Japan ware. The people do not think much of them, and they are therefore almost always quite plain, either black or red. There is no inferiority to the Japanese in capacity for sketching fantastic designs. The future may see great developments in this branch of the art, but at present it is practically untouched.

The process of manufacture is as follows: Little basket-like boxes of the required shape and size are woven of fine bamboo wicker-work, upon round chucks of wood prepared and firmly fixed for the purpose. The bamboos used,

which are usually split and cleaned by the women and children, are of different kinds, that called myin-wah being the most highly esteemed. Similarly, the yet, or woven basket-work, is of different degrees of excellence, the kyoung-lehn-yet being the finest. Some of the Shans and the better workmen at Nyoung-oo are celebrated for the delicacy of their work. On this is then evenly applied with the hand (so that the slightest particle of sand or dirt may be at once detected) a coat of the pure wood-oil. This is then put away to dry—not in the sun, which is apt to pucker and blister it, but in a cool airy place. Some careful workmen have often an underground room prepared specially for the purpose. After three days it is quite dry and hard, and is then liberally and evenly covered over with a paste called thah-yoh. This is made in a variety of ways, the commonest being a mixture of finely-sifted teak sawdust, thi'see, and rice-water. But instead of the sawdust, or often mixed with it, finely ground bone-ash, or paddy-husk burnt and strained through a cloth, is kneaded in. In the coarse, common articles for everyday use, tempered clay and some other materials are often used; but this being thicker and less putty-like, is apt to scale and come off in flakes, especially if at all roughly used. This thah-yoh is allowed to dry quite hard, and the box is then fastened to a rude lathe, which is turned with one hand, while the other is employed in polishing the box. This smoothing-down is effected with sifted ashes, or sometimes with a piece of silicious bamboo, which is as good as fine sand-paper. When this is done the box is ready for a fresh coat, which almost invariably consists of a mixture of finely powdered bone-ashes and thi'see. This, after drying, is polished in the same way as before. We have now a box of a brilliant, glossy black, in itself very pretty and fit for use anywhere. But this

is only the end of the first stage; none but the byat and common wooden platters are left in this state.

The ground colour of the great majority of the boxes and cups is red; but some of the black wood-oil is required to rise through it and define the pattern. This is effected in a most ingenious way. The black box is put on the lathe again and turned round, while the lines and spots, and the form of the black pattern generally, is sketched on with a soht, or split stile, charged with thi'see. The drawer has no guide but his eye. There is no preliminary mapping out, yet a practised hand will never make a mistake and spoil a box. The fresh thi'see thus put on stands up above the general level of the surface. The whole box is now covered with red paint; and when this is dry the box is put on the lathe again, and the operator turns it round and rubs it steadily with ashes. By this means the red paint is removed where the lines of thi'see rise above the general surface, and the black pattern stands out clearly on the red ground. A quaint chequer-work is also always produced, where the slightly projecting edges of the bamboo wicker-work raise the black wood-oil through the vermilion layer. Still, however, it is not finished. No box is complete without three colours; and this last shade is applied in an equally simple and effective way. The desired pattern is incised with a graving-tool called a kouk—often nothing more elaborate than a pin firmly tied to a piece of stick. Then the whole box is coated over with the new colour, and this is in its turn polished off on the lathe till nothing remains but the lines of the engraved pattern. If another colour is required, a similar process is gone through.

When the design is complete, a clear varnish of another vegetable oil, called shan-see, with a dash of thi'see in it, is applied all over as a last touch, unless indeed a very

high polish is required. This is effected by rubbing gently with the powdered petrified wood found so useful in imparting a gloss to the alabaster images. The patterns are none of them very intricate, and are handed down as heirlooms from father to son, so that the same family will have all its ware made on a few clearly-defined models, and there is no fear of "spoiling a set." The invention does not as yet soar beyond scroll-work and line-figures of infinite variety; but should a foreign demand spring up there would be no lack of skill to meet it; just as the Rangoon tattooers have taken to copying pictures out of the *Graphic* on English sailors' breasts.

The supreme test of excellence in the manufacture is when the sides will bend in till they touch without cracking the varnish or breaking the wicker-work. Connoisseurs can discriminate between Shan, Nyoung-oo, and the ware of other places, by the shadow thrown on the inside (which is varnished plain red or black), when the cup or circular box is held at an angle of forty-five. Three colours only are used besides the black groundwork; but variety is produced by graduating their intensity of shade. They are red, green, and yellow. Red is prepared from finely ground vermilion mixed with shan-see. The Nyoung-oo people prefer a vermilion called hinthapadee yuè, prepared by themselves, to that procured from China and used elsewhere. The home-made stuff seems to be much brighter in tint. Myay-nee, red ochre, is used only with the coarsest work. For yellow, yellow orpiment is ground down and washed several times until a pure, impalpable powder remains. This is mixed with a pellucid gum, and when required for use, worked up with shan-see. Green is obtained by adding finely-ground indigo to the yellow orpiment until the required tint is obtained. Red and yellow are, however, always the predominating colours.

The thi'see is turned to a variety of other uses besides the manufacture of lacquer-work; applied to wood, or to marble and clay images, it enables them readily to take on gilding. It is used as a waterproof varnish to all the umbrellas in the country, and makes them as impervious to rain as if they were made of wood, while it protects the palm-leaf against the rays of the sun, which otherwise would burn it as brittle as an egg-shell. All the racing and war-boats in Burma are painted with it, and the best caulking in the world could not make them more water-tight. Finally, boiled down thick it furnishes the material for delineating the square heavy characters of the sacred kammawah-sah, the ritual for the admission of brethren to the sacred order.

The oil is usually put in the sun for a short time before being used, and is at first of a light brown colour, soon darkening into a brilliant black. It seems to be of a particularly mordant character, and raises huge blisters on the hands of some people, leaving marks of the ashy-white colour suggestive of leprosy. Hence strangers suspected of being afflicted with the terrible malady always declare they are thi'see workers; and many people avoid these latter, in case they might find they had been holding communication with an outcast. A lotion composed of fine teak-wood sawdust, mixed with a little water, is used as a cure for the blains. Many of the workmen periodically swallow small doses of the wood-oil, under the impression that it acts as a preventive. The capriciousness with which the varnish acts, leaving some men quite unharmed and punishing others severely, has given rise to a proverb in Nyoung-oo:—

> Thi'see is a witness
> To a burgher's fitness;
> If bad, he's marked an outcast;
> If good, not long can doubt last.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NGA-PEE.

THERE are few articles of food which meet with more energetic denunciation than the favourite Burman condiment, nga-pee, which means literally pressed fish. The frogs of France, the rats and puppy dogs of China, the diseased liver of the Strasburg *pâtés*, the "ripe" cheeses of most European countries, and the peculiar character of game in England, with its occasional garniture of "rice," all meet with condemnation from those who dislike such dainties. The smell of nga-pee is certainly not charming to an uneducated nose, but the Backsteiner or Limburger cheese of Southern Germany is equally ill-calculated to evoke approbation on a first experience. An old herring barrel smells strong, but there is nothing in nature that more than nga-pee hath an ancient and a fish-like smell. Travellers on the steamers of the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company are wont to rail in no measured terms at the fish-paste which forms an invariable and obtrusively evident part of the cargo, yet no Burman would think a dinner complete without his modicum of nga-pee, and it is a noteworthy fact that one form of the condiment is of frequent appearance on English dinner-tables in the East, under the name of balachong, a term borrowed from the

Straits Settlements, but which designates nothing more nor less than a specially prepared variety of nga-pee. In the same way there are equally various opinions with regard to the celebrated Durian, a fruit found as abundantly in the Tenasserim province as in the islands of the East Indian Archipelago, and equally highly prized by Burmans. Some Englishmen will tell you that the flavour and the odour of the fruit may be realized by eating a "garlic custard" over a London sewer; others will be no less positive in their perception of blendings of sherry, noyau, delicious custards, and the nectar of the gods, while the somewhat objectionable smell is regarded as doing no more than suggest, or recall, a delightful sensation. I am not aware that any Englishman has been equally enthusiastic with regard to balachong, but there is no doubt that nga-pee sehn-sa ["raw-eaten fish paste," so called because it is fit for consumption without being cooked,] is identical with this much used substitute for anchovy sauce, and is often brought direct from the Burman bazaar by Madrasi butlers, who declare it has come all the way from Penang, and charge correspondingly.

Of nga-pee there are three main kinds—nga-pee goung, toung-tha nga-pee, and nga-pee sehn-sa. Each of these has its special varieties, getting their names from the township where they are prepared, or from the species of fish used in their manufacture.

Nga-pee goung, or whole nga-pee, is the most prized and the highest in price. That made at the village of Payah-gyee, in the An-gyee circle, not far from Rangoon, is celebrated from the rocky promontory of Modain, with its golden pagoda, to the barren solitudes of Mogoung, the Burmese Siberia. It may be made from any kind of fish, but the varieties preferred are the nga-koo, an amphibious, slimy fish, found in ponds and ditches wherever there is

plenty of mud and something under a foot and a half in length; and the nga-gyee, a fish very similar in general appearance and size, but called by the English the scorpion fish, and very much dreaded for the wounds it causes with the pectoral spines. The great object in the preparation is to keep the fish quite whole, not so easy a matter as would at first appear. The process is as follows: A great mass of the fish, some of them only half dead, are thrown together into a big wooden mortar, and a man stands over them and works about with a curious cleaner made of a bamboo, the end of which has been slit and frayed into a kind of stiff brush. By this means it is surprising how soon the fish are scaled, and how effectively it is done. The larger specimens are however almost always cleaned by hand, the shoulder fins and the tail being also removed. They are then thoroughly rubbed with salt and tightly packed in bamboo baskets, each of which is well weighted down. They are thus left for from twelve to twenty-four hours, the superfluous juices of the fish straining out at the bottom. Then they are cautiously taken out one by one, well rubbed with salt again, and laid out on a mat in the sun to dry. On the second day they are equally carefully packed away in huge earthenware jars with abundance of salt between the layers of fish. These jars are then put away—no easy matter with some of them, which might have served to conceal the forty thieves of the *Arabian Nights*—in as shady and cool a place as can be found. Gradually the liquid rises to the surface and evaporates by degrees, leaving a layer of solid salt on the top. Sometimes this fish-brine becomes alive with maggots, when the fish have not been sufficiently pressed, or have not had enough sun. When this occurs the liquid is drawn off the top and more salt is added, but in no case are any of the fish rejected. Usually the fish are ready

for the market in a month's time, and will keep as long as may be wanted. They are eaten roasted, or fried somewhat in the same way as the "Bombay ducks," well known to the Anglo-Indian gourmand; sometimes also they are made into curries, the cook taking as great care as the manufacturer to keep them quite whole. The salt used is in many places, such, for example, as the An-gyee township, made on the spot. The soil there is strongly impregnated with salt. Water is run through it after the ground has been ploughed. The water is then collected in a tank, whence it is taken to pots, placed over furnaces, and evaporated to dryness, and the salt obtained is piled on sloping boards so that the bittern may run off.

A specially esteemed variety of the nga-pee goung is that called nga-tha-louk, after the fish of the same name, the hilsa, or "Indian salmon," which would be perfect, were it not supplied with bones all through its body, seemingly utterly irresponsible and unconnected with the spine. This handsome fish, silvery, shot with purple and gold, is not scaled, nor are the head, tail, or any of the fins removed. Each fish is cleaned and rubbed with salt in the usual way and exposed to the sun. Then they are spread out on the floor of a shed on mats, and mats are also put over them, and on these are placed weights of some size. This is all that is required. In four days at the outside they are ready for sale, and are then handled with most reverential care by both buyer and seller, for the hilsa is a fish that the foreigner loves, and therefore always commands a good price.

The second kind is that called toung-tha nga-pee, that is, pounded fish, or fish-paste. It also frequently goes by the name of damin nga-pee, from the bamboo trap in which the fish are usually caught. This is the form of nga-pee which has earned the bad name for the whole

preparation. It is made almost exclusively from shrimps and the smaller kinds of fish. These are spread out as they are caught, without the addition of salt or any cleaning whatever, on mats in the sun. There they remain for two, or perhaps three, days—by which time their condition is better imagined than closely investigated. They are then thrown into a huge wooden mortar and pounded together, with a liberal addition of salt. It does not take any very heavy work or length of time to reduce them to a state of mash, in which one fish is not to be distinguished from another. The whole is then heaped up in a great mound under a shed near the house, and several hollow bamboos, with little holes here and there in their sides, are thrust into it. Out of these a liquor, called ngan-pyah yay, runs, and is carefully collected in jars set there for the purpose. This, as well as some other fishy oils, is greatly esteemed for culinary purposes, and fetches a good price. When these juices cease to run freely, the fish-paste is ready for sale, and is dug and shovelled out in an unceremonious way, contrasting very markedly with the loving care taken of the "whole fish nga-pee." In the country boats it is usually carried in bulk, piled up as corn, or salt, or commodities of a like nature might be loaded; and therefore a boat which has once been used for this purpose is easily known again. In English steamers it is, of course, packed in jars, but the odours are none the less fragrant on that account. This is the true and only mode of preparation, and the marvellous tales related by some foreigners of the burial of the fish in the earth for periods varying from a week to a year (!) are due either to a guileless nature, or a too powerful imagination. The soil of Burma needs no manure.

The fish most sought after for damin nga-pee are those belonging to the family of cat- and dog-fish, from the

circumstance that they have no scales, and therefore make a smoother compound. . Some of these attain a huge size, the tame dog-fish at Theehadaw, above Mandalay, being quite five feet long, and blessed with mouths that would take in a leg of mutton. Many of them also have the peculiarity of breathing air, rising to the surface of the water and opening their mouths for the purpose; while, when the inland pools dry up after the rains are past, they are capable of making long journeys overland.

Sehn-sa nga-pee is made entirely from prawns, and comes chiefly from the Tenasserim coast, Beht (the English Mergui) and Tavoy being the centres of its manufacture. The prawns are spread out on mats in the sun as soon as caught and left there till they are fairly well dried. Then they are mashed up by hand, abundance of salt being added, and are stirred up several times a day regularly for three days, lying out in the sun all the time. After that, the paste is ready for use, and is packed in small jars. Properly, sehn-sa is that made from the prawns exposed immediately after being caught. When some hours elapse before they are spread out to dry, the resulting nga-pee is called yet-pyan; and if a whole day elapses before the exposure, yet-oht. The greater the delay, the more powerful the smell and the more piquant the flavour—a fact for Englishmen to remember when they take balachong. Ket nga-pee is simply a variety made of large prawns, which are heavily pressed in baskets called ket, before they are put out in the sun to dry. They are then pounded with salt and pressed again, after which they are ready for consumption, either as they are or after frying.

Notwithstanding the open disfavour with which the English regard nga-pee, the Burmese hold by it as the most savoury and necessary portion of their dinner, and vast quantities are exported to Upper Burma, where the

manufacture, owing to the smaller fisheries, is not equal to the demand. The indignation which a crusade against the condiment by a young civil officer with more zeal than discretion caused in 1880, will not soon be forgotten. Cholera was rather bad in Yandoon, one of the great places for nga-pee, and the assistant commissioner, convinced that the heavy smells must be the cause of it, issued an order forbidding the manufacture of the fish-paste, or its sale in the public markets, as well as that other cherished but strong-smelling dainty, prawn-head oil. The result was an avalanche of petitions to the chief commissioner, and something very like open riot in the town. Equanimity was not restored till the too energetic official was removed to another station, and the loo-gyees pointed exultantly to the fact that as soon as they began to make up arrears in the way of nga-pee consumption, cholera left the place. Nevertheless, Yandoon is not a charming place of residence to a man with a sensitive nose.

Fishermen are promised terrible punishments in a future life for the number of lives they take, but popular sympathy finds a loophole of escape for them. They do not actually kill the fish. These are merely put out on the bank to dry after their long soaking in the river, and if they are foolish and ill-judged enough to die while undergoing the process, it is their own fault. Nevertheless, some strict people hold by the doctrine of the Manichæans, who asserted that the soul of the farmer migrated into herbs so that it might be cut down and thrashed out. The baker becomes bread and is eaten. The killer of a deer becomes a deer; of a fish, a fish; and so on. But nevertheless, if all the fishermen became monks one day, the next would see some of the pious trying their hands with the cast-net.

CHAPTER XXIX.

PLAYS.

THERE is no nation on the face of the earth so fond of theatrical representations as the Burmese. Probably there is not a man, otherwise than a cripple, in the country who has not at some period of his life been himself an actor, either in the drama, or in a marionette show; if not in either of these, certainly in a chorus dance. It would be wrong to say that there is no other amusement in the country, but it is indisputable that every other amusement ends up with a dramatic performance. When a Burman is born there is a pwè; when he is named there is a pwè; when a girl's ears are bored; when the youth enters the monastery; when he comes out again; when he marries; when he divorces; when he makes a lucky speculation; when he sets up a water-pot; builds a bridge; digs a tank; establishes a monastery; dedicates a pagoda, or accomplishes any other work of merit; when there is a boat or horse race; a buffalo or cock fight; a boxing match, or the letting loose of a fire-balloon; a great haul of fish, or the building of a new house; when the nurseries are sown down, or the rice garnered in; whenever in fact anything at all is done, there is a theatrical representation. Finally, there is a pwè, as grand as his friends can make it, when the Burman dies.

The plays are always given in the open air, and any one that pleases may come and look at them, and stay as long as he likes without paying, or being expected to pay, a single pice towards the expense of the performance. A large shed has indeed been erected in Rangoon, nightly performances take place, regular troupes are engaged for a definite period, and money is charged for admission; but the idea is an English one, and opposed as it is to ancient custom and the old free attractions elsewhere, meets with barely enough support to keep it going. The giver of the pwè simply constructs a small roofed enclosure for himself, if the pwè is held on open ground, and fits it up with a bedstead covered with mats as a kind of private box, with a few chairs and plentiful mats round about it. To this reserved space he invites a few of his most intimate friends, sending them the ordinary little palm-leaf packet of pickled tea by the hands of his daughters or sisters. All other places in the circle are open to the first comer, and when a pwè is announced, women may be seen early in the afternoon strolling down, with rolls of mats on their heads, to secure good places. Abundance of refreshments and materials for smoking are taken, for it will be sunrise before the play is over. The commonest place for a pwè, however, is in the street opposite the giver's house. All traffic is unceremoniously stopped. There is nothing to be done but to hoist up the hinged front wall of your house, or throw open the windows and go out on the verandah, if the construction of the building is more solid, and there you are with the theatre come to your doors. There is no trouble with the stage. A circular space is covered with mats and it is all ready. This is called the pwè-weing. In the centre is a branch of a tree, or the stem of a plantain palm stuck in the ground, which goes by the name of the pan-bin. Yule and others have endeavoured

to discover some forgotten meaning for this centre of action, comparing it with the altar of the old Greek stage, but probable it never had any greater significance than to mark the centre of the arena and prevent the audience from crowding in too much so as to curtail the space. The actors when questioned about it always say that it is there to represent a forest, such as forms part of the scene of action in every play. This of course is merely an answer, and not an explanation. Europeans of an inquiring turn are apt to complain of this Burmese (and Scotch) method of supplying information. Why such a phantom attempt at representing a forest should be made, when no effort aims at portraying the palace which is of equally regular appearance in all zahts, is not by any means evident. The property box of the company indeed serves as a throne, but this is an accident, and if there is no property box, there is no throne. The people take up positions long before the performance commences, and no doubt the pan-bin serves no deeper purpose than to indicate to intending spectators where the action will take place, and where therefore they may deposit their mats without being turned out later for being in the way. Further than the central tree and the mats nothing is required till the play begins. Then round about the pan-bin are arranged, as footlights, a number of small earthen pots filled with petroleum, usually the thick black crude oil brought from the wells at Yaynan-gyoung. Bits of rag or cotton seed are used for wicks, and the cups are replenished by the actors as occasion may require during the progress of the play. They are freely used throughout by both performers and audience as a means of obtaining lights for their cheruts. It is somewhat trying to the dramatic sense when the princess of the piece after a prolonged ngō-gyin, a dolorous wailing for her sad fortunes, driven from her love and strayed far in

the jungle through devious paths to the immediate neighbourhood of beeloos, ogres, ghouls, and horrid creeping things, when thus forsaken and finishing off with the sense of an impending danger, she proceeds to light a great green cheroot, and placidly blow great clouds till her turn comes again. No less startling is it, when in the middle of a sonorous declamation from the king a half-naked youngster scuttles across the stage to get a light and scrambles back again. Englishmen, not understanding the progress of the play, notice these things more than anything else, and get an impression that the whole thing is ludicrous and unreal. This is very far from being the case. When the Yeendaw Mah-lay, the Mandalay *prima donna*, sings, or when the famous puppet player, Moung Thah Byaw, is performing, there is not a sound, the whole great crowd, and it must not be forgotten that the performance is in the open air, is hushed to its farthest limits, and not till the passage is finished does the usual buzz and chatter begin again. Those who have heard it will acknowledge that this spontaneous tribute must be as gratifying as the loudest stamping of feet and whistling on fingers of a London theatre. In fact a Burman might perhaps be justified in doubting the enthusiasm and admiration which finds vent in whistling.

The acting as a whole cannot be said to be satisfactory. The circumstances are against it. Who could "lose himself in his part" in the centre of a crowd of people all smoking and often talking? Moreover the subjects treated are so romantic and remote from ordinary worldly events that no one can be expected to realise them. Finally, who could keep it up for ten hours at a stretch? Nevertheless, individual passages are occasionally wonderfully well done. The piteous wailings and desolation of the princess; the majesty of the king; the grim savagery

of the demon, are often very effectively delineated, while the clowns are almost invariably exceedingly clever. They are chosen for their ready wit, many of the jokes being extempore, as well as for their power of facial contortion. Caricatures of the performances of the other actors and comic songs form their chief stock in trade, and the text of the play is very far from being adhered to. It is an undoubted fact, if scarcely complimentary, that the clown has much more to do in the play and is very much broader in his jokes when Englishmen are present than when there is a purely national audience. The prolongation of the comic parts is due to a courteous desire to please the visitors, buffooneries being much more readily understood than high dramatic art, while the coarseness is unfortunately due to the same impression which makes a Burman always produce brandy and beer for the refreshment of a white man, the idea namely that that is what he likes best. None of the higher class troupes, more especially those from Upper Burma, will however condescend to this sort of thing.

The company is almost always made up in Mandalay. There are Lower Burma troupes, but it is usually taken for granted that they cannot be better than second-rate. The British subject is firmly persuaded that "far birds have fair feathers." In their humble phraseology they say, "In the Low Country we are not up in the humanities." This is not exactly complimentary to English rule and civilisation, but in one sense it is true. In native territory every one is taught in the monasteries, and having no other relief from Pali doxologies, becomes saturated with the phraseology and ideas of the zahts. Thus, from the theatrical point of view, the Mandalay youth starts with a distinct advantage over the British Burman who potters away in lay and elementary

Government schools over addition and multiplication and the sterilities of the First Reader. To qualify for the first ranks, therefore, the ambitious Peguer starts for the Royal City of Gems, practises as much as he can there, and watches the most celebrated players. Then, after a time, he obtains an engagement, and turns up in Rangoon as a quasi a-nyah thah. The stage managers, usually old actors who have made some money and are inclined to take their ease, go up to Mandalay during the rains, when comparatively little is doing, the wet, combined with the four months of Lent, making pwès few and far between. There they cast about and get together a company, entering into a written engagement with the actors, male and female, for the season, which lasts about seven months, from Ta'soungmohn to Nayohn (roughly, November to May). The manager makes all arrangements, and usually takes up his head-quarters in some town or large village whence he can easily move to the surrounding places where the company may be wanted. The salaries paid are very good. A first-class prince or princess commands from 800 to 1,000 rupees for the season. A good loo-byet, or jester, will get five or six hundred. After these come the actors who take such parts as the king or the maids of honour. The dancers, that is to say, those who simply dance and do no more, get about sixty rupees; the seing-thama, the musicians, receive forty. The company have not more than two or three rehearsals together before they commence their tour, but this does not matter much, because every one knows his part well, and the cue is not a matter of supreme importance. The zaht-oke, the manager, draws all the money from the performances. As much as 450 rupees has been paid for a two-night performance. This, however, was exceptional, and it was a marionette play with the great Moung Thah Byaw

in the prince's part. Very few people could afford so much as this. The best engagements are those known as a-hloo pwè, given by a rich man in celebration of some religious festival, or to commemorate some event in his family, such as the donning by his son of the yellow robes of the monastery. The elders of the village, or the custodians of the pagoda, often collect money for the performance of some of the religious zahts, depicting avatars of the Lord Buddha. Then there are subscription pwès, where some energetic lover of the drama suggests the propriety of a play to the inhabitants of the village, or of a street in the town. He goes round gathering subscriptions, and then negotiates with the zaht-oke for as many nights as the manager is inclined to give for the money. This system has unfortunately led to abuses. Sharp individuals have discovered the possibility of collecting three or four hundred rupees among the people, paying the manager two hundred out of this, and keeping the rest for themselves. The dodge has been too often tried in Rangoon, but in the smaller towns it is still practicable, and is far too often carried out. Besides these performances by accredited companies, there are others called kyee-gyin pwè, given by professionals anxious to make a name for themselves, and for this purpose giving gratuitous exhibitions. These are naturally very uneven from the difficulty of getting a complete company together. But in all cases the vast majority of the spectators pay nothing at all. The guests invited by packets of le'hpet usually contribute a rupee or two towards the expenses of their host, but otherwise the entire cost is defrayed by him.

The pwè is begun by the arrival of the band, which, with characteristic Burmese disregard of the value of time, ordinarily comes upon the scene several hours before the actual commencement of operations. They occupy

one side of the stage, and tune up their seing and play away vigorously while the people gather. The zaht-thama and zaht-thamah, the male and female *artistes*, drop in casually along with the spectators: Each is ordinarily accompanied by a servant to carry their dresses and help them in robing. All of them, women as well as men, make their preparations in full view of everybody. Each lady has a toilette-box with all the necessaries for making up. Many are the hints the village maidens receive in the way of touching up eyebrows, artfully swelling out the sadohn with false locks of hair, intertwining the raven tresses with red and white fragrant flowers, toning the complexion with thana'kah, and so on. The young men look on critically while the princess scans herself in the little hand-mirror and tranquilly completes the touching-up and other feminine mysteries so little dreamed of by ordinary European swains. No one has the slightest appearance of recognising the ludicrousness of the thing, or of deprecating the exposure of little female wiles and vanities. The zaht-thamah wears her acting skirt indeed when she arrives, but everything else—the tight-fitting lace jacket, the stiff brocaded wings, the jewellery, the pagoda-like crown—is put on by the side of the stage at the bamboo rack which supports the masks and necessary changes of dress. The audience either looks on with stolid earnestness, or takes no notice whatever.

Finally, having smoked all through the toilette, the princess and the maids of honour quietly seat themselves —squat would be more accurate, but does not sound nice—at the edge of the pwè-weing, and continue to smoke till everything is ready and their call comes. Then they simply stand up and are on the stage immediately. They do not cease smoking then, except during a long song. The men are equally calm. The king

chews betel and salivates copiously between observations or speeches, but in so doing he can only be said to be the more realistic. Incidental ballets are introduced to relieve the monotony of the dialogue, and the maids of honour and the clowns perform wonderful feats of winding themselves about as if they had no bones, picking up coins with the mouth bent back to the ground, doubling themselves up so that the toes touch the forehead, and so on.

Sometimes there are great fights at these pwès. A young man has got surly because there is such a crowd that he can see nothing of what is going on, and runs up against another equally inclined to quarrel for the same reason. Or perhaps he is angry because some one has supplanted him in a flirtation with one of the girls who have established a temporary bazaar in the outskirts of the crowd. Or there may be a dispute as to the ownership of a mat. There are a few loud words; a woman's voice joins in. Next minute the two are smashing away at one another with their long hair streaming over their faces and down their shoulders. Friends join in, and almost before you can realise what has happened, the actors disappear, the women and children run off home, and the street is filled with an excited crowd of men swaying backwards and forwards and fighting promiscuously. For this reason pwès are never allowed in British Burma without permission from the civil authority, and numbers of policemen are always at hand to nip any riot in the bud. With the same object performances are only allowed in large towns about the time of the full moon, when there is abundance of light, in case the street lamps should be put out. The worst row of the kind I ever saw, however, was started by two of the Burman policemen themselves. They quarrelled about the merits

of two a-pyo-daws, talented *danseuses*, and the crowd, relishing the absurdity of the thing, backed up the quarrel with such energy that broken heads were plentiful and a ward in the infirmary was filled.

Foreigners very often make the mistake of taking the performances of children's companies to be actual zaht plays. Even Captain Forbes, usually so accurate, falls into this error in speaking of a representation of the Waythandaya zaht. This must simply have been a yehn, an adaptation of the great drama for performance by the little choral dancers. For people who do not understand Burmese well—among whom, of course, the late Captain Forbes was certainly not to be included—the mistake is very easy. They are far prettier to look at, and much preferable in every way to the actual text of the birth-story, mainly because they are not so dismally drawn out, and can ordinarily be got through in an evening.

The dramas are all founded on the tales which Shin Gautama told of five hundred and ten of his previous existences, or on events in the lives of kings and heroes in India. None of them are original. The story in every instance is taken from the Hindoo, the adapter in most cases not even taking the trouble to nationalise the names of places and characters. It is only in the extemporising of the clown that anything really characteristic comes out. The Hindoo sense of humour is vastly inferior to the Burmese.[1]

Ten of the religious dramas stand out prominently from the others. These are called the Zaht-gyee Tsè-bwè, and

[1] The term Zaht or, still more so, Woottoo (*i.e.* a real story) is properly applied only to the religious plays, the five hundred and ten Jatakas. The work of fiction not necessarily religious is called a Pya-zaht, an *acting* play. Thus you speak of the Ootayn-na Woottoo (given in part by Yule), but of the Zawta Gohmma Pya-zaht.

are designed to show how the Lord Buddha in turn overcame all the deadly sins. They are named (1) *Taymee*, (2) *Zanecka*, (3) *Thoowoon-na-shan*, (4) *Naymee*, (5) *Mahawthata*, (6) *Boo-yee-dat*, (7) *San-da Gohmma*, (8) *Nah-yidda*, (9) *Weedooya*, and (10) *Waythandaya*. Several of them are very interesting. The *Waythandaya* is probably best known on account of the affecting nature of the story and the beauty of the composition. It illustrates the boundless pity of a Budh. The prince—Gautama's last incarnation on earth previous to his appearance as Prince Siddartha or Theidat—gives away everything he possesses, even to his wife and children. The Naymee and Boo-yee-da zahts, or woottoos as they are called indifferently, are also very popular on account of the particulars they give of nga-yè, the great hell, and the country of the nagahs, fabulous creatures, like the kraken, that sleep deep down below, far beyond the ken of mortal man. The similarities between Norse mythology and Buddhist cosmogonies have often been noticed, and the legend of the kraken or nagah is not the least singular.

Of the other more secular plays, Oo Hpo Nyah is the most celebrated recent author. He was killed in the late king's reign by the Tabè Mintha, one of the most brutal of the royal princes, and for whose son's head King Theebaw has twice paid a thousand rupees. The young man is however still alive, and, it may be hoped, will never succeed to the throne. His hectoring manner, on thirty rupees a month, in Rangoon, "shows the bricks below the gilding," according to the national proverb. His father's victim, Oo Hpo Nyah, was particularly celebrated for the sweetness and melody of the songs introduced in his pieces, these songs of course being practically original. No one before or since is equal to him in this respect. The *Weezaya Zaht* is probably his masterpiece, and forms

one of the stock in trade of every company in the country. Moung Hpay, the son of a woon-gyee, or chief minister of state in Mandalay, is the best and most voluminous living writer. An ever favourite play is the *Yamah Zaht*, the fight of the "monkeys" and the men in Ceylon. It was performed by a palace troupe specially sent down to Rangoon by the late king on the occasion of the proclamation of the Queen as Empress in India. Everything was of the best possible kind; the royal drum and cymbal harmonicons, the trumpets, the flutes, even the bamboo clappers, were of an excellence never before known in Rangoon. The players were famous wherever Burmese was spoken, and the play lasted five nights. The general opinion was that it called forth more admiration of King Mindohn than loyalty for the Empress.

All that has been said of the zaht pwès, those in which men and women act, applies with equal force to the yoht-thay, or marionette pwès. It is well known that the Burmese esteem these more highly than what Englishmen would call the legitimate drama. The action in the puppet-shows is much more complicated than on the plain mat stage, the dialogue is very much more refined, and there are none of the *lâches* perpetrated by individual zaht-thama striving for effect. Especially there is never, even with the provocation of a number of Englishmen present, the least semblance of coarseness. Further, supernatural beings, nats and beeloos, elephants, dragons, ships, thrones, and properties of all sorts can be introduced which are impracticable on the limited arena of the mat platform. The elocutionary powers of the performers behind the curtain, the verve and passion of the songs, the accuracy and melody of the recitative, to command success must be at least as good, if not better, than the best of what is met with in the pwè-weing. Added to this there

is the manual skill implied in moving the strings attached to the heads, limbs, and joints of the puppets, which are often exceedingly cleverly manipulated. The national preference for the marionette play is therefore not entirely without justification.

The action takes place on a raised bamboo platform some thirty feet long, the puppets performing on the stage in front of a curtain which screens the manipulators down the whole length of the erection. One end of the stage is devoted to scenes at court, and is adorned with a throne, golden umbrellas, and other royal insignia. The other extremity represents, with artfully arranged twigs and tufts of grass, the jungle and forests to which, during some part of every play, the prince and princess are sure to have to fly. The puppets, which are frequently as much as two or three feet high, are always gorgeously and expensively dressed. The larger ones are all cut in wood, and the carver's skill often turns out very clever presentments of rugged-faced old men and exuberantly jovial loo-byets. Most of the zahts, which deal greatly with the supernatural and fabulous, are only represented as yoht-thay pwès. No amount of technical skill could represent in the public streets an a-thoorehn, a creature (destined incalculable ages hence to be a Buddh) whose height is a few thousand miles, and who produces eclipses in his play by taking the sun or moon in his fingers or between his toes.

Curious as it may seem, the puppet players often acquire a far more really personal reputation than the legitimate actors. The zaht-thama mostly get a name for dancing as much as for anything else. The Yeendaw Mah-lay indeed is equally celebrated for her voice and her graceful movements, but the yoht-thay-thama become renowned for dramatic fervour, for tender passion, for

dry wit, just as thoroughly and personally as if they actually appeared before the audience. Except the "*prima donna*" just alluded to there is no professional celebrated on the stage, who is not far better known as a first-class marionette player. These performers are all men and boys. None of the female parts are ever taken by women. Moung Thah Byaw is unequalled in "prince's" parts. He is recognised as Tha-bin-woon; every stage-manager, every zaht-oke in the country receives his word as law. No tenor with a *voce fenominale*, no bird-voiced Patti, is more sought after nor received with greater honours. His name has become a proverb in the mouths of people who never heard him. "Thah Byaw Hé," a Mergui man will say when he makes a marvellous haul of fish, or gets a super-excellent cheroot. A journey of his to Rangoon has produced a popular saw, corresponding to the English "killing two birds with one stone." Moung Thah Byaw said he was going to worship at the Shway Dagohn pagoda. He gave a performance or two, and made several (Burmese) fortunes. Hence the saying—

Payah lè poo yin
Lehp oo lè too yin.

"You go and worship and dig turtles' eggs."

"Turtles' eggs for prayer
Reward the pious player."

Moung Thah Byaw is not only a good singer, but himself writes very good songs, and is particularly clever at coining in phrases the wisdom of many with the wit of one. No other "prince" is worthy of being mentioned with him. Best known among the clowns is Shway Loht Gyee, who has the knack of making local jokes wherever he may be, and takes the fullest advantage of the scope which the language affords him in the way of punning. Just after the small railway from Rangoon to Prome was

opened, Shway Loht Gyee was performing in a piece where the prince and his servant, the clown, wander away into the forest and fall into a state of great destitution. The prince bewails his sad fate in a dolorous tay-dat (a tune appropriate to such lamentations), and finishes by asking what they are to do. The loo-byet replied, "The English have just opened a railway here. You go and trespass on it, and I'll lay information against you and get the reward." The idea showed considerable acuteness in a man who had never seen a railway before.

Among the "princesses" many youths are noted for the sweetness of their voice. The two best are Moung Thah Zahn and, running him very close, Moung Moo, both of them, like Thah Byaw and the clown, Mandalay men. The accuracy with which they imitate the female voice is wonderful, the more so as every song abounds with trills and turns which would expose the least roughness. Neither in the recitative, the tremulous erotics, or the doleful wailings of the maiden for her absent lover, would the stranger ever suspect the performer's sex.

The plays are performed during the day only in a few and exceptional cases, such as the arrival of a great man, who cannot stay over the night, or when a local feast, limited in its time, occurs. The great and legitimate season is the night, and frequently a play, especially a puppet play, extends over six or seven successive nights. The majority of the audience stay the whole time, from seven or eight o'clock at night till sunrise. It is not, however, to be supposed that they hear it all through. Abundance of mats and rugs are brought, and not a few, after listening till midnight or thereabouts, calmly curl themselves up to sleep, and slumber away for two or three hours, heedless of the braying of the nès, and the crash of the cymbals only a few yards off. Then they wake up and

fall in with the progress of the piece with as keen interest as if they had heard every word of it. Most of the young people, however, prime themselves with the anti-soporific le'hpet, "pickled tea," as the English call it, and bid defiance to drowsiness. This condiment is as regular a crown to a Burmese dinner as cheese is to an English one, and with the same idea, possibly erroneous in both cases, that it promotes digestion. The greater quantity of it is prepared by the Shans and Paloungs, hill tribes on the Chinese border, and is floated down the river on small bamboo rafts to keep it moist. The Burmese mix with it salt, garlic, and assafœtida, douse it in oil, and add a few grains of millet seed. Both Burmese and English names are misleading. The leaves forming the basis are not those of the tea tree, but of a shrub which Hooker calls the *Elœodendron orientale*, while Dr. Anderson asserts it is the *E. persicum*. However that may be, one of the grievances which Englishmen have when they attend a pwè is that they are always induced by their host to take pickled tea, and perceive in it nothing but the overpowering horrors of the assafœtida. Pwès and assafœtida are therefore associated with one another to the detriment of both.

The foreigner cannot detect one tune from another, or the recitative from any one of them. Consequently he declares there is only one tune, or no tune at all, according to the capacity of generosity in him. The same thing has been said by an inappreciative Burman of the "vipers" of the Royal Scots Fusiliers. He admired the conscientiousness and pertinacity with which they defied the mosquitoes under the shade of the trees, and droned away on their pipes all through a tight-tunic'd and perspiring Rangoon afternoon garden party, as the observant Burman imagined at one endless tune. The national music is not written down, and each actor has a variation of his own, but the

smallest girl in the audience would detect a kayah-than from a doh-bat-than with as much readiness as any English boy would separate "Drops o' Brandy" from the "Old Hundred?" But there are some people who do not like the Italian opera, and even say so.

The following short outline of the *Zawtagohmma Pya-zaht* will give an idea of the style of the more popular drama, as distinguished from the purely religious birth-story. The writer is an old player himself. He lives at Pegu, and the *Zawtagohmma* is perhaps his most successful effort. The text has been published at one of the vernacular presses in Rangoon, and the sketch given is a translation of the Zaht-lan, the "path of the play," prefixed by the editor. "In the country of Pyin-yaw-wada, of which Yazohtta was the sovereign, the name of the Southern Queen was Thoo-naymma-daywee, and that of the Northern Queen Thoo-kaythee-daywee. The Queen of the Southern Palace was about to bear a child, and the king issued an order that her majesty of the North should attend on her. This was very irritating to the Northern Queen, and she resolved to ruin Thoo-naymma-daywee, and for that purpose conspired with Shin Gway Nee, the midwife. As soon as the child was born it was to be killed, and set afloat on the river in an earthen pot, and the *accoucheuse* was to say the Head Queen had been delivered of a still-born baby. A twin son and daughter were born, and Shin Gway Nee put each of them in a jar and launched them on the river, and went and told the king that they were still-born. Yazohtta, the king, was very angry, and punished his consort by setting her to dig the ground and carry water for the palace. The Queen of the North was promoted to be Head Queen, and her daughter, Pyinsaroopa, was made tabin-deing (*i.e.* she was set apart as wife for the next king, and not allowed to marry).

"With regard to the bodies of the prince and princess, the prince was carried down the Yamoona river and the Thoo-woonna nagah swallowed the body, and the spirit of the prince entered into the ruby that hung in the necklace of the dragon. Not long after the nagah became nervous and uncomfortable in his mind, and proceeded to the monastery of the recluse Bayda-sehnda, in the Theeree-woonna forest. There he went to keep the ten holy precepts. As soon as the ya-theht saw the necklace with the ruby in it, he knew by his baydin that the spirit of a young prince was enclosed there. He therefore represented to the dragon that it was unseemly to wear precious things when he was observing the injunctions of the law. The nagah therefore gave him the necklace in alms, and having kept the ten precepts the prescribed number of days, returned to his own place. When the prince was born anew from the ruby, the ya-theht gave him the name of Zawtagohmma and explained to him all that had happened in the prince's last existence.

"The princess's body was carried away into the Southern Ocean, and there the fish kegga-theetha, whose head is shaped like a sceptre, ate her up. The spirit of the princess entered a pearl in the fish's head and dwelt there. A violent hurricane came on, and the fish was carried up into the sky and fell down inside the enclosure of the recluse Bayda-thehnda. When the ya-theht cast eye son the pearl, he knew that a princess was in it, and he gave this pearl, called the myissa, to the Zawtagohmma prince. From the precious stone was born in seven days the princess, and she got the name of Palè-thwè. The ya-theht knew from his mystic books, that in the former existence they had been brother and sister, and told them all about it.

"When they grew up he told them they were to go back

to the old king and queen's capital in the Pyin-yaw-wada country, and on their way they were to make offerings and give the pearl to the Gyoh nat. But the prince forgot all about the Mehttoo Gyoh, and the spirit therefore became very angry with him. While they were travelling on, the nat separated them by means of magnets which attracted the iron in their bones, and drew them away to the devils on either side, to right and to left, who held the magnets.

"Meanwhile, in the Pyin-yaw-wada country, Zawtagohmma's father and mother, and his stepmother, the former Northern Queen, had all of them gone to the country of nat-dewahs (*i.e.* died), and there was no king to rule over the land. The Pyinsaroopa princess therefore (who had been kept single to marry the new king), according to ancient custom, sent out the poht-thwin yattah (a chariot which has no driver, and stops where the horses will), and it hurried away from the palace and came and stopped beside the sleeping Zawtagohmma. When he woke he entered the chariot, and the horses returned straight to the capital. The prince then ascended the throne and married Pyinsaroopa.

"In the meantime, the princess who was born from the pearl came to the house of a pohnna and his wife, and was delivered of a child there. One day she covered the baby with an emerald green neckerchief, and laying it down on the bank of a lake, went into the water to bathe. But a bird, called kehmma-yekka, swooped down from the skies and carried off the green handkerchief, baby and all. Then it flew to the palace of Zawtagohmma and circled round in the air above it. The prince shot at it with a bow, and it fell down and died, and vomited up the green neckerchief, and the baby, still alive. As soon as Zawtagohmma saw the infant and the neckerchief, he knew that they were Palè-thwè's, and clasping the child in his arms, he set out to find the princess, and wandered far and wide.

"Palè-thwè herself, as soon as she had obtained permission from the pohnna, set off in search of the prince and her child. The Brahmin priest, with the aid of his mantras, made her assume the appearance of a man, and despatched her to seek Zawtagohmma in the disguise of a harp-player. He also instructed her that she would meet the prince on the way, but she was not to reveal herself to him; she was to explain how it was that the two had been separated by the Mehttoo Gyoh nat, and say that she had met Palè-thwè, and that the princess had gone to Pyin-yaw-wada; Zawtagohmma himself was to take the counsel of the Baydin, wise men, and return to his own country, where he must offer sacrifices to the ten gyoh nats, whereupon he would meet the Princess Palè-thwè, the wife he so tenderly loved. All these instructions the pohnna gave to the princess, and then let her go. All happened as he had foretold. She met the prince and he followed her advice. They returned to the Pyin-yaw-wada country, and all was happy."

The above is the merest outline of the story. The piece is very long, and there is abundance of incident. The prince's servant, and usually also the two holy men, do the comic part of the business, but this is always so purely personal a matter that the printed text can give no real notion of what actually is said. It serves merely to point out the lines which the loo-byet must follow in his impersonation. The stage books, written on palm leaf, contain but very few detailed speeches, and merely indicate the story, and throw out hints to the actors. The following is one of the songs sung by the prince in his wanderings through the forest in quest of Palè-thwè. It is written to the tune of the "Chase in the Taw-maw-yohn Forest," that in which the king goes to hunt in the epic of the Ramayana. The "woot" or "woot-daw" referred to, is

the penalty of suffering the same punishment, or death, which has in a former existence been wrongfully or needlessly inflicted on others. Thus the great minister, Weedooya, spoken of, who was an avatar of the Lord Buddha, had in a previous life dragged a frog by the leg so that it died. Hence he is dragged at the tail of the fierce Nat's horse until he dies himself. The prince fears that some such evil destiny is working itself out on him:—

FATE.

The wind breathes chill
Across the rill
That cuts the forest track;
The haze to mist
Whitens, I wist,
And I am lost, alack.

The branches spread
Dull-green and red
Flat o'er the sullen stream;
Comes through the gloom
The gibbon's boom,
And weird the parrot's scream.

Ah, sad the scene;
But yet, I ween,
A sadder wight am I;
The thoo-young seed[1]
Gives lovers rede,
But sears my tortured eye.

Ah, cruel spite,
Ah, cursed night,
That tore my Queen away;
More comfort here,
In jungle drear,
Than in the golden day.

[1] The fruit of the thoo-young bin, a kind of half shrub, half tree, has a curious resemblance to the figure of a woman, and *soupirants* are wont to detect fancied likenesses to the object of their affections, and deduce favourable omens from the discovery.

The fog's death-cloud
Hangs like a shroud
Upon the shagg'd hill-side;
The tall trees mope,
The wild beasts grope,
Nor know what may betide.

Yet the great sun
Needs cast but one
Fierce eye upon the gloom;
The mists all rise,
Mix with the skies,
And rainbows deck his loom.

Ah, wretched wight,
Such omen bright
Gleams not upon my fate;
Nor faint, nor bright,
Hope's golden light
Lends me no heart to wait.

The story old
Of Nat so bold
Creeps o'er my harassed thought;
Haply this hill
He treadeth still,
And here that horror wrought.

In warlike guise,
With wings on thighs,
He scales where eagles flag;
His magic steed
Hath such great speed
The lightnings seem to lag.

Ah, fateful law,
Ruthless Woot-daw,
Weedooya, art thou feared?
From life long past,
Thy sin at last
Eftsoons must dree its weird.

Nor soon, nor late
With calm, cold gait
The Woot relentless tracks;

Nor prayer, nor fees
Will bring release,
'Tis blood for blood it lacks.

Thy limbs fast tied
The Nat doth ride
O'er gorge and cliff and plain;
At his horse heels
Dragged, no faint steals
O'er thee to spare one pain.

Though blood forth gushed
And brain was crushed,
Thy heart was panting still;
Lingered thy breath,
Nor came glad death
Till ye twain reached this hill.

The fiend sprang down,
And from its crown
He hurled thee many a rod,
With eldritch glee
He hurled e'en thee
The great embryo god.

So the old Woot
With stealthy foot
Nor pity e'er evinces:
So must some crime
From ancient time
Have robbed me of my princess.

Methinks 'twas here,
This place so drear,
That great Weedooya died
Here or elsewhere,
With praise and prayer
I seek him for my guide.

Ah, still the Woot
Its baleful fruit
Doth bring before mine eyes.
See, bright and clear,
The Saddan mere
And round the mountains rise.

Like jangled chime,
Or tangled rhyme,
The piteous tale is told;
The Saddan Min[1]
By death solves sin
Committed once of old.

Thrice wretched she,
By destiny
Marked out the blow to guide;
She, then as Queen
Thoobadda seen
Had erewhile been his bride.

But beauty's curse
Hath made her nurse
Greed most akin to hate;
The milk-white tusk
She sought to busk
With glories six her state.

Then her behest
She hath addressed
To Thaw-nohttoh, the hind;
Fell hunter that,
As Dewadat
Much evil hath designed.

Then he with guile
His purpose vile
With yellow robe conceals;

[1] The Saddan Min is the Celestial White Elephant, an avatar of the Buddha Gautama. Hence it is that white elephants are so revered and regarded as the symbol of universal sovereignty. Thoobadda had been the Saddan's queen in a previous existence. She repents, dies of sorrow, when she hears of the Lord White Elephant's end, and afterwards, in consequence, becomes a Yahanda in the time of the revealing of the Buddha. Mè-badda is the actual consort of the Saddan. She became, in after existence, Yathawdaya, the wife of Prince Theidat, before he left the palace and devoted himself to acquiring the Supreme Wisdom. Thaw-nohttoh, the hunter, became the wicked Dewadat, cousin and brother-in-law of the Lord Buddha, and now languishes in Awidzee, suffering punishment for his attempt on the life of Shin Gautama.

The Monkish garb
Hides the sharp barb,
Nor ought of sin reveals.

And when he nears
The silver mere's
Fair jewel-studded edge;
Then like a snake,
Through baleful brake,
He parts the golden sedge.

His arrows' tip
With poison drip,
He rears his cobra head;
The bowstring twanged,
The dart deep-fanged
Its course too well had sped.

Thy heart is cleft,
Thy life is reft,
Now, reel'st thou, milk-white King;
The woodland hushed,
And darkness brushed
O'er earth its sooty wing.

The silent moon
Doth fright the noon,
And Death e'en breath restrains;
Save one wild scream
Might check the stream
Of blood in murder's veins.

Mè-badda, Queen,
The deed had seen,
She caught him ere he fell;
Would staunch the flood
Of red heart's blood
That fiercely forth doth well.

Ah me, 'tis vain,
Wild with heart-pain
Forth flies the frenzied wife
To seek for foes,
Or mayhap those
Might save the Saddan's life.

Ye who doubt truth,
The boundless ruth
Of the all-pitying Budh;
Now list ye well
What then befell,
And quit your scoffing mood.

Straight to the cave,
Where crouched the knave,
He walks with gentle mien;
Himself bestows
The tusks' white snows
For Thoobadda, the Queen.

Ah, cruel Woot,
Why strayed my foot
Unto this eerie spot?
See low I bow
To earth my brow;
Be mine less awesome lot.

Here erewhile trod
The embryo god,
Now all is dull and blear;
O'er land and sea
I seek for thee,
My Princess, even here.

By lonesome lake,
Through forest brake,
I'll track each rumour's breath;
Where roams the bear,
By fierce beast's lair,
I'll seek thee e'en past death.

But, 'gainst the Woot's
Fierce power what boots
To strive with eager zeal?

* * *

Peace, doubting heart,
No fate can part
True lovers fond and leal.

As an illustration of a purely religious play may be given the *Naymee Zaht*, one of the Ten Great Birth Stories.

It is occasionally represented as a yoht-thay, or marionette play, but it is rather expensive to put it on the stage well. It was "preached" in the monastery of Meggadawoon, during the stay of Shin Gautama in Mètheela, of which country he remembered to have been king in a previous existence. The following is the story in brief:

In old times the King Minga-deva ruled over the country, and for many years was entirely given up to pleasure and worldly passions, till one day his barber showed him a grey hair—"a flag of the king of death," as it is commonly called in Burmese—which he had found on the royal head. The king was struck with this *memento mori*, and immediately saw yawning before his eyes the abyss of mortality. Alarmed at the vision, he gave up the gay raiment and idle pleasures of earthly glory, and wandered into the desert to end his life as a hermit. His self-denying piety gained for him on his death elevation to the seats of the Byammahs, and all the 82,000 princes who succeeded him on the throne of Mètheela followed the example of their ancestor, and retired into hermits' cells when they felt their end approaching. Minga-deva, from his blissful superior seat, followed with earnest solicitude the fortunes of his dynasty, and when at length he saw that it was drawing near its close, he returned once more to earth. He was conceived in the womb of the then Queen of Mètheela, and was born of her, and received the name of Prince Naymee. From his earliest years, as the pohnnas discerned from his horoscope, his mind was firmly and unwaveringly directed to the prescriptions of religion and to pious observances. Once when he felt a doubt in his mind as to whether the outward giving of alms or the inward self-contemplation was the more meritorious, the Tha-gyah King himself came down and instructed him that abundant charity would indeed secure him a new

birth in the heavens of Nat-dewahs, but that only the cultivation of the mind could ensure a rise to the blessed regions of the Byammahs. The Dewah King was so attracted by the religious spirit and piety of the young prince that on his return he spoke of it with admiring delight to his subject Nats. Their curiosity was excited by the account of such distinguished qualities in a man, and they begged the Tha-gyah Min to procure for them the acquaintance of so holy a personage. Accordingly the king gave orders to a young Dewah named Matalee to descend to the earth, and invite the young prince to a visit to the nat-heavens.

It was the day of the full moon, and all the inhabitants of Mètheela were assembled in the streets and on the pagoda platforms to observe the ceremonies of the holy day, when a great wonder happened. While the full moon shone high and clear in the heavens, there appeared through the clouds a glowing light in the east, so that all the people cried aloud in astonishment that two moons had arisen in the sky at the same time. But as the light gradually neared and neared, it became evident that it was a nat-chariot with the young Dewah inside. Matalee advanced to the prince and invited him to enter the car, and proceed to the realms of the blessed. Naymee stepped in without fear, and when he was told by the charioteer that there were two ways open to him, of which one led through the horrors of Nga-yè, and the other through the Elysian fields, he at once desired to visit both. First they went down to the eight vast burning chambers, and saw the pains of the damned in the fiery gloom of hell, and then they ascended and viewed the pure delights of bright paradise. After Naymee had met in audience the highest king of Nats, he returned to earth to give to his subjects a true account of what fate would befall them after

death, according as they followed the path of virtue or of vice.

After many peaceful and honoured years, when Naymee at last saw his hair begin to grow grey, he, like his predecessors, entered the state of Yahanda and abdicated the royal power. The same venerable custom was followed by his son Thalarazana, the last of the roll of kings, who, when old age began to snow upon them, devoted themselves to the holy order in the town of Yathay-myo (Kappilavastu).

It is evident that such a play as this, if it offers plenty of incident, is all the more difficult to put on the stage, and can hardly be satisfactorily produced at all on the ordinary stage. No zaht furnishes more subjects to the Burman artist than that of Naymee, and pagoda corridors all over the country are decorated with the scenes in hell, which are much more easily pictured to the mind and the eye than the pure joys of heaven.

END OF VOL. I.

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